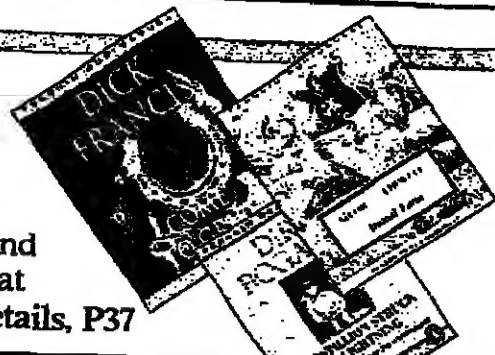


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SECTION 3

# Children may be particularly at risk

## New infection linked to mad cow disease

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JEREMY LAURENCE

THE Government admitted for the first time yesterday that "mad cow" disease could be transmitted to people.

A new strain of the human form of the disease has been identified and the Government's chief adviser on the subject has said that it could turn into an epidemic.

The new findings, which relate to ten people suffering from a form of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, were reported to ministers this week, prompting tighter controls on slaughtering cattle and a call for urgent guidance on whether children can safely eat beef.

CJD, which usually affects the elderly, is similar to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), or "mad cow" disease, but for the past decade the Government has refused to accept that it could be triggered by BSE.

Now, however, research into the ten cases has suggested a link and raised the prospect that the variant may be a wholly new disease. The patients were all under 42 and their symptoms were different from those of typical CJD.

Government experts said there was no way of telling how virulent the new condition would be or how many people would be susceptible. Dr John Pattison, chairman of the committee advising the Government on BSE, said that he had never seen the variant before. "It is totally unpredictable, but at one extreme there is a risk of an epidemic," he said. Dr Robert Will, head of the CJD Surveillance Centre, said: "I believe this is a new

phenomenon. There is reason for major concern."

The new findings were reported provisionally to the Prime Minister on Monday and officially to the Cabinet yesterday morning. By then, the Government had arranged two Commons statements and a press conference attended by ministers and medical experts.

The evidence will also be presented to EU veterinary experts in Brussels on Friday. Brussels has threatened Germany with legal action if it went ahead with a ban on British beef, but there were immediate fears yesterday that the disclosure could damage the industry.

In his Commons statement, Stephen Dorrell said that there was still no scientific proof that "mad cow" disease could be transmitted to man by beef, but he announced further urgent research into possible links between BSE and CJD. The Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory

Committee was being asked to report on the risks to children by the weekend.

Mr Dorrell said: "The scientific evidence for the risks of developing CJD in those eating meat in childhood has not changed. However, parents will be concerned and I have asked the committee to provide specific advice."

As Tory MPs voiced concern about the effect on the beef trade, the Health Secretary said that it was as important "for us not to overreact as it is for us not to underreact."

But Labour's Harriet Harman said: "The time has passed for false reassurance. The question of whether there is a link between BSE and CJD is an issue of immense importance for consumers and particularly for parents of young children. The situation remains uncertain. But it's now apparent there has been too much reassurance and too little action."

And later a junior Scottish minister admitted that the Government may have been to blame for some farmers not slaughtering BSE-infected cattle in the late 1980s. The Earl of Lindsay conceded that the Government may have "unwittingly" tempted farmers not to destroy infected animals by failing to offer full compensation between 1986 and 1989. "In retrospect we possibly unwittingly allowed the temptation that some farmers may

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Banbury cattle market prices were down by £10 a head yesterday; the auctioneer expects a further drop when cows ready for slaughter are sold today

## It'll be a disaster, say the market forces

By JOANNA BALE

WHEN a barmaid at Banbury cattle market warned a customer against eating her beef sandwiches yesterday, it wasn't "mad cow" disease that she had in mind. "I'm afraid the beef's a bit fatty today. I'd go for the ham or the egg if I were you."

Next door, in ring one, farmers were counting the cost of Stephen Dorrell's equally frank revelation that there ought after all to be a risk of humans contracting CJD from infected meat.

The market's managing director, Jim Watson, had switched off his mobile phone to enable him to work after a stream of calls from worried farmers. "It's the same every time we have a BSE scare," he said. "Prices are down and it will be worse tomorrow when we sell the fat cattle that are ready for slaughter. I've been getting lots of calls from farmers wondering whether it's worth coming to sell their livestock tomorrow."

According to Mr Watson, whose market is the biggest in Europe, prices for a beef steer worth £500 were down by £10. Like every beef farmer, Mr

Watson believes that the meat is "100 per cent safe". He said: "This is disastrous for us. Only a handful of people die from CJD yet all this fuss is made and the public react. The Government should concentrate on big killers like cancer and heart disease."

But as Mr Watson tried to generate interest in a frightened friesian, farmer John Elkington declared: "I'm keeping my hands in my pockets today. I'll not be bidding."

Mr Elkington, who farms in Bicester, added: "I rang up my exporters this morning to

see what they wanted and they just said don't bother. They might not even want the stuff I bought from them last week which has already been slaughtered. It'll just have to stay in the deep freeze."

Rachel Fyfe, 30, who farms with her husband in Market Harborough, studied the collapse of the beef market after BSE while a student at the Royal Agricultural College in Cirencester. She said: "The Government are just covering their backsides, but they know that the research is also tenuous. Until it is ever proved beyond all doubt, they

should not scare people like this; after all there is a risk in everything we eat.

"We will lose so much money, both in the domestic and the export industry. The rest of Europe claims it doesn't have BSE, but it's pretty likely that farmers in Europe have it and quietly get rid of the affected cows."

But one 71-year-old man who has been in beef farming all his life, said: "People who will be put off by this will have already stopped eating beef, but most will continue to enjoy it. There's nothing like a juicy piece of roast beef."

## Ofel cuts BT phone bills

New price-cap proposals from Ofel, the telecommunications regulator, will ensure that British Telecom customers will see their phone bills fall from an average of £50 a quarter to about £30 over the next five years. BT said that it was "disappointed" because the proposals are tighter than anticipated. If they are rejected Ofel will seek a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry. Page 25

## America agrees to arm Taiwan

America further inflamed China by agreeing to sell Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other high-tech weapons to Taiwan although it refused submarines. Page 14

## Drug dealers face six years minimum

By RICHARD FORD  
HOME CORRESPONDENT

PERSISTENT burglars face a minimum of three years in prison and repeat drug dealers at least six years under tough new sentencing plans being proposed by Michael Howard.

The Home Secretary is also to end the practice by which the length of time a prisoner spends on remand is automatically included as part of a jail sentence. Instead, the judges will be given discretion to take the months on remand into account when imposing a sentence.

Prisoners will be allowed to earn a maximum of about 17 per cent remission of their

sentences through good behaviour while in jail under the changes.

Mr Howard wants to publish a White Paper on his proposals before Parliament rises for Easter. The seven-chapter draft document, which will be discussed by the Cabinet today, includes proposals for automatic life sentences for second-time rapists, armed robbers and serious sexual offenders.

It also includes proposals to make every prisoner serve the full sentence imposed by the judge, unless he earns remission, overturning the present situation in which a person given a four-year sentence is released automatically after two years.

However, it is Mr Howard's plan to bring in minimum sentences of three years for people convicted of burglary three times and at least six years for those convicted twice of dealing in Class A drugs that will bring a sharp rise in the prison population. Class A drugs include heroin, cocaine and LSD. It has been estimated that the overall effect of Mr Howard's sentencing proposals will be to increase the jail population, now at a record 54,000, by at least 10,000.

Twelve jails each holding 800 prisoners and costing a total of more than £1.2 billion will need to be built to cater for the impact of the sentencing proposals. They will all be built by private finance and

are in addition to new jails already planned for Fazakerley in Liverpool, Bridgend in South Wales, Telford in the Midlands, Salford in Greater Manchester and another in Essex.

Minimum jail terms will apply only to offenders convicted of crimes committed after the new sentencing regime starts and the Government believes the full effect of the proposals will not be reached until 2013.

The measures will be phased in. Automatic life sentences for second-time rapists and armed robbers will be introduced first, followed by real-time sentences and finally the minimum jail terms for burglars and drug dealers.

## Station offers first class marriage lines

THE platform announcement came 50 years too late for the couple from *Brief Encounter* but yesterday a British railway station unveiled plans to conduct marriage ceremonies.

Couples can now hop on a Eurostar for a Paris honeymoon after tying the knot at Ashford International station.

The £265 ceremonies, to be conducted in Ashford's first class departure lounge, were announced when Kent County Council agreed to grant Eurostar a licence to hold civil weddings. There is room for up to 60 guests in the navy and orange room.

## England brothers play in Charltons' footsteps

By PETER BALL

TERRY VENABLES, the England manager, revived a great English football tradition yesterday when he named Gary and Philip Neville, the young Manchester United defenders, in his squad for next Wednesday's friendly against Bulgaria at Wembley. If they play, they will be the twentieth pair of brothers to win England caps, and the first to do so since Bobby and Jack Charlton.

The Charltons played together on 28 occasions between 1965 and 1970, including the 1966 World Cup Final. Bobby won the first of his 106 caps soon after the



Dennis and Leslie Compton.



Jack and Bobby Charlton.



Philip and Gary Neville.

1958 Munich disaster, while Jack was 30 by his first appearance.

The Nevilles have done it rather more quickly. Gary, 21, won the first of his 6 caps against Japan last summer

before he had played a full season in the Premiership. Philip, who was 19 in January, has risen even more quickly, coming into the squad three months after establishing himself in the Uni-

ted team. They are inheritors of a proud tradition dating back to the 1870s, when Sheffield Wednesday's Clegg brothers, Charles and William, won caps in 1872 and 1873 respectively. Over the

next ten years Ernest, Charlie and Arthur Bambridge became the only trio of brothers to be capped by England.

Most of the 19 pairs were capped before 1900, but Clem Stephenson and George appeared together in the 1920s, and Jack and Sep Smith in the 1930s.

In the 1970s Brian Greenhoff won 18 caps, but his brother Jimmy was not so honoured. Nor, in a full international, was Dennis Compton. He played for England in wartime internationals. Leslie went on to win two caps but Denis was distracted by cricket — to some effect.

England team, pages 45, 48



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## Vital questions for consumer safety

Is it safe to eat beef after the latest scientific findings?

The Government insists that it is. Even if there is now evidence that BSE can pass to humans, they say, the public remains protected because all the parts of the carcass that could conceivably carry infection have to be removed at the slaughterhouse before beef goes into the food chain. The prohibited items are brain, spine, thymus, tonsils, spleen and intestines.

### Are the slaughterhouse controls adequate?

They had to be tightened last November after some abattoirs were found to be not fully removing spinal cord. Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, says they are now to be tightened further. Also, any meat from animals over 30 months old will have to be deboned in specially licensed plants, a requirement previously only for exported meat.

### What, if anything, can beef eaters do to protect themselves?

Those who want 100 per cent assurance of safety should stop eating beef, although this is not as easy as it seems. Material from cattle can find its way into products as diverse as chicken soup, wine sauce, lamb stock cubes and jellies. Food manufacturers insist, however, that they do not use any of the prohibited items.

### Are some types of beef safer than others?

Most scientists say good steak or roast beef carries little if any risk. Only 15 per cent of pure beef herds have ever had BSE and BSE has never been found in the muscle meat of cattle. But much of Britain's meat comes from dairy cows. Half of all dairy herds have been affected by BSE. Dairy meat tends to go into cheaper products, such as pâtés and meat pies. Those who want to play safe while still eating beef should avoid meat products of whose origin they cannot be sure.

### Is any age group more at risk?

CJD, the human counterpart to BSE, has traditionally been a rare disease of the elderly, affecting about one in a million people worldwide. In recent years, an unusually large proportion of CJD cases in Britain has occurred in people under 42. It is the ten CJD cases from this age group that the Government now says were probably caused by eating BSE-infected meat.

### When did the infection occur?

Between 1986, when the first case of BSE was officially diagnosed in cattle, and November 1989, when abattoir controls were put into effect, or so the Government thinks. Since 1989 the abattoir controls should have fully protected the public. Unfortunately, there is nothing that can be done now about exposure to infection before November 1989.

### Is the incidence of CJD higher in UK than elsewhere?

No. The disease, first diagnosed in the 1920s, occurs with roughly the same frequency everywhere. However, the incubation period for the disease is anything from 10 to 20 years. So if BSE has passed to a significant number of humans, it could take many years for this to show up as a big increase in cases of CJD.

### Does CJD affect any particular occupation?

The evidence is inconclusive despite a statistically unusual cluster of cases among dairy farmers during the past four years. But dairy farmers also show an unusual tendency to go down with the disease in countries where there is no BSE.

## Knackers and offal merchants feed the hysteria

A test for anyone tempted by a career in politics: read aloud without hesitation, in a manner which virtually the whole Cabinet on the front bench beside you could admire. "Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee." Now say "bring together leading experts in neurology, epidemiology and microbiology to provide scientifically based advice on the implications of different forms of spongiform encephalopathy."

Keeping up? Try, next, at speed "the Government Surveillance Unit in Edinburgh which specialises in Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease." We picture the Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell, practising these lines with his civil servants while trying to master his brief between lunch and 3.30 yesterday. He came through with flying colours. Dorrell's performance will have done nothing to harm his quietly growing reputation.

Then things fell apart. Dorrell urged MPs to steer clear of party politics. MPs steered straight into them. You or I would have feared the worst: that Labour might seize with hysteria on this issue as a stick with which to beat the Government, adding to public alarm; and that Tory backbenchers would leap mindlessly to the defence of "the industry" — their farming pals, as well as slaughter-



MATTHEW PARRIS  
POLITICAL SKETCH

ers, bonemeal crushers and other adored members of the community.

We might fear Labour would then accuse the Tories of being "the farmer's friend" and the Tories accuse Labour of hatred towards agriculture.

All our fears would have been justified. Tory backbenchers behaved yesterday as though the greater part of the electorate were composed of knackers and offal-merchants, plus a heavy contingent of butchers in all the marginal seats. Labour be-

haved as though Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were sweeping the nation like the Black Death while government ministers peddled infected hamburgers on every corner.

Harriet Harman, Dorrell's Shadow, spoke first. She operates in only one mode: mad-mum reproach. "Public confidence is hanging on a thread," she declared, then did her best to cut it. "Would the Government's Chief Medical Adviser feed beef to his grandchildren?"

"Or send them to grammar

schools?" cackled Dame Elaine Kellett-Bowman (C. Lancaster).

"We need to restore public confidence," cried Harman. We sure did, after her remarks. I decided beef must be safe to eat, after all.

Then Paul Marland, chairman of the Tory backbench agriculture committee, rose: wonderfully groomed and suited as ever. Mr Marland, who turned 57 on Tuesday, shows no signs of CJD, but the colour of his eyebrows is departing alarmingly from the rich brown of his hair. Is he eating too much beef?

Marland sneered at Labour's response. By the time he sat down, I felt sure Labour must be right.

Labour's Harry Barnes (Derbyshire NE) spied a government conspiracy to conceal the dangers. I began to sympathise with the Government. Christopher Gill (C. Ludlow), who comes from a family of butchers, deplored the alarm. I began to share the alarm. Harold Elletson (C. Blackpool N) said Labour were dominated by "extreme vegetarian anti-farming activists". I sympathised again with Labour.

It was once said of Tsar Nicholas II that the two most powerful men in Russia were the Tsar, and the last person he had spoken to. Where BSE is concerned, and in a strangely different way, my opinion too depended on the last politician I had heard.

## Farmers await further fall in a market still suffering from previous scare

## Beef industry fears public panic over 'mad cow' disease

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE multibillion-pound beef industry was bracing itself yesterday for a wave of consumer panic and plunging sales after the admission by the Government that some people probably have been infected with "mad cow" disease.

Cattle farmers are still recovering from the previous scare over BSE — bovine spongiform encephalopathy — which caused beef sales to fall by 20 per cent last December. Sales are still down by 13 per cent on this time last year.

Sir David Naish, president of the National Farmers' Union (NFU), said: "This is a very serious development. Restoring consumer confidence is now paramount. I am glad the Government has acted promptly on the new scientific advice and welcome the Health Secretary's statement that beef is still safe to eat."

Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, told the Commons that controls on slaughterhouses would be tightened to ensure that no potentially infected meat reached consumers. In addition, meat from all cattle over 30 months old, which are at greater risk of developing BSE, will have to be deboned in specially licensed plants. This was previously required only for exported beef.

The latest developments cast a shadow over the future of an industry that is still hugely valuable, despite a

long-term decline in beef consumption, which has dropped from 20 kilograms per head in 1980 to 15.5kg today. BSE has played a part in this slide, but more significant until now has been the cheapness of competing meats, such as chicken.

Household purchases of beef, including processed products, totalled about £4 billion last year, according to the Meat and Livestock Commission. Britain also exported 242,000 tonnes of beef, worth £520 million. Nearly four fifths went to other countries in the European Union.

The industry supports 41,000 dairy farmers and 95,000 beef farmers. More than two thirds of British beef output comes from the dairy herd, either from male animals or from cows culled at the end of their milking life, a big element in the export trade. About 15,000 people work in abattoirs (other than poultry plants) and 3,000 in the animal by-products processing industry.

So far BSE has had little impact on exports, which have risen steadily in recent years. France, which took 98,000 tonnes of British beef last year, has resisted pressure from Germany for a ban on British beef unless it is certified to come from BSE-free herds.

But the latest disclosures could reopen the debate about the risk to public health. The best EU markets last year after France were Italy (27,200 tonnes), Ireland (24,100 tonnes) and the Netherlands (17,845 tonnes). Germany imported only 1,500 tonnes. South Africa (27,055 tonnes) was the main destination outside the EU.

Ian Gardiner, the NFU's director of policy, called for a "rational and cool" response to the latest scientific findings. Even if some recent deaths from Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease were linked to BSE, he said, this did not mean that beef now in the shops was a risk.

"All those parts of the animals which contain the BSE agent are removed from the food chain at the slaughterhouse," he said. "I see nothing in today's announcement to indicate that any beef which people can now buy would be infected with BSE."

Ray Darlington, executive officer of the National Federation of Meat and Food Traders, which represents butchers and small slaughterhouses, said: "We are still examining the ministers' statements. Obviously we are very concerned about the implications for our businesses."

What makes BSE potentially so disastrous is that dairy herds, the biggest source of British beef, have been much more affected than beef herds. More than half of dairy herds have had at least one case of BSE, compared with only 15 per cent of beef herds.

Since BSE was first diagnosed, 158,882 head of cattle showing symptoms of the disease have been destroyed, nearly all of them dairy cows, at a cost of £130 million in compensation payments for farmers. At the peak of the epidemic up to 1,000 new cases were being reported every week. The rate is now running at about 250 a week.

The disease is thought to have passed to cattle in meat and bonemeal containing the remains of sheep infected with scrapie, a condition related to BSE. The infection was recycled through the cattle herd because sheep remains were used in cattle feed. All feed of this kind was banned in July, 1988. This should have cut off the primary source of infection.

Leading article, page 21



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Leading article, page 21

## Brussels caught in a dilemma

FROM OUR FOREIGN STAFF

VETERINARY experts from across the European Union will examine the news on British beef in Brussels tomorrow. The Commission will take advice from the veterinary committee on whether more steps are needed to protect consumers from any risks, a spokesman said.

The Commission has backed the British argument that there is no evidence of a human health hazard in the consumption of BSE-infected beef. "If the scientists say more action is needed then more action will be taken," a spokesman for Franz Fischler, the Farm Commissioner, said.

In a measure similar to one operating in Britain, sale of British beef offal has been banned in Europe since 1990 as a safeguard. The European authorities are



in a delicate position over British beef. The Commission has resisted attempts by some continental authorities to take measures against imports and it backs the British Government argument that there is no evidence of any link between Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease and BSE.

Last month it began proceedings against the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate after it banned British beef on the ground that the action was an illegal barrier to trade. On the other hand, the Commission has cited consumer fears as a factor in its decision to extend a ban on the import of American beef from cattle raised with growth hormones. Bonn will now come under pressure to

tighten the terms of a European compromise placing some curbs on British beef. The British statement may help the German Government to wriggle out of its dilemma. "If a national level ban on imports were legally possible, the federal government would have done it long ago," Horst Seehofer, the Health Minister, said.

Only a tiny handful of cases of BSE have been discovered in French cows, but in recent months the French press and scientific community have begun focusing on the possible dangers of British beef. Last month the French National Academy of Medicine emphasised the "persistence of mad cow disease in the United Kingdom". It called for a ban on the sale in France of beef offal from cows aged less than six months originating in Britain.

## Public confidence hanging by a thread, says Labour

By ALICE THOMSON AND JAMES LANDALE

LABOUR accused the Government yesterday of giving the public "false reassurance" in the past over the possibility of "mad cow" disease spreading to humans.

Harriet Harman, the Shadow Health Secretary, urged ministers to restore public confidence by publishing all the new scientific evidence which linked bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) to its human equivalent, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD).

And in a clear reference to John Gummer, the former Agriculture Minister, Ms Harman added: "There must be no more photocalls from ministers feeding beefburgers to their children."

In a heated Commons debate on the two ministerial statements, Ms Harman told Stephen Dorrell, Health Secretary, that he had lost public confidence and that people would not be satisfied with "Government platitudes".

She said public confidence was "hanging by a thread" and urged the Government to give people "the full facts and honest advice" on which to base their decisions. "That relies on the Secretary of State giving full disclosure of the scientific evidence and clear advice and guidance. The time has passed for false reassurance," she said.

She added: "If we do not have full information and full disclosure of the facts, the public's response will be fear

nobody should stir up unnecessary panic."

Sir Archie Hamilton (C. Epsom and Ewell) said Labour had shown that it was "not the farmer's friend".

John Greenway (C. Ryedale) warned of the potentially "catastrophic" effect on British farmers if the new evidence was reported irresponsibly by the press. "There is no less reason to have confidence in British beef today or tomorrow as there was yesterday," he urged Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, not to hesitate in moving "swiftly to support the market".

Christopher Gill (C. Ludlow), who comes from a family of butchers, urged the Government to show restraint before scaring the country. "The risks of catching CJD are infinitesimal," he said.

Dr Gavin Strang, the Shadow Agriculture Minister, said the important lesson to learn was not to allow the BSE agent to get into food. "It is crucial that animals which display the symptoms of BSE are not slaughtered for food," he said.

Simon Hughes, Liberal Democrat health spokesman, asked whether schools and hospitals should now stop serving beef. Glenda Jackson (Lab. Hampstead and Highgate) said that the Government's attitude over beef could threaten children. Mr Dorrell said that at present no institutions needed to withdraw beef products from their menus.

## New form of CJD

Continued from page 1 have succumbed to," he told peers. The Shadow Agriculture Secretary Gavin Strang described his words as "a remarkable admission".

In the second Commons statement, Douglas Hogg detailed fresh safeguards for slaughterhouses and animal feeds. The Agriculture Minister also promised existing controls would be "even more vigorously enforced". Under the new rules, carcasses from cattle aged over 30 months must be deboned in specially licensed plants supervised by the Meat Hygiene Service and the trimmings kept out of any food chain. The use of mammalian meat and bonemeal in feed for all farm animals is being banned.

The announcements were triggered by a report on ten CJD victims which said: "The most likely explanation at present is that these cases are linked to exposure to BSE before the introduction of the specified bovine offal ban in 1989." It concluded: "The risk from eating beef is now likely to be extremely small and there is no need for it to revise its advice on milk."

Dr Pattison admitted that the committee had agonised over whether there was an alternative explanation. "We have thought this through over and over because it would have been much more reassuring to come to a different conclusion. But putting the unusual symptoms together with the different pathology made it inescapable."

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Young victims of CJD, from left: Victoria Rimmer, Peter Hall, Jean Wake, Stephen Churchill and Michelle Bowen. Miss Rimmer fell sick in 1994 and is still in a deep coma, the others have died

## 'We were told it was a disease of the old. It isn't now'

BY KATE ALDERSON  
AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE mother of a meat pie maker who died of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease yesterday brandished a letter from 10 Downing Street rejecting any link with BSE.

"I should make it clear that humans do not get 'mad cow disease', although there are similar diseases which occur naturally in humans and have been known about for very many years," the Prime Minister's Private Secretary, Rachel Reynolds, wrote on his behalf last October. "I must reas-

sure you that there is no evidence to suggest that eating meat causes this sort of illness in people."

A month later Jean Wake, 38, died with her daughter Leighann, 15, and mother Nora Greenhalgh, 75, at her bedside. "I didn't believe him then and I don't believe him now," said Mrs Greenhalgh of Sunderland. "I was always convinced that Jean's illness was caused by eating infected beef and had a lot to do with her time working in a factory putting the fillings into pies."

"This was a deliberate cover up to avoid tarnishing the reputation

### VICTIMS

of British beef. The decision to keep people in the dark was motivated by money."

Peter Hall, a student from Chester-le-Street, Co Durham, died four weeks ago, just before his 21st birthday. He was a vegetarian but ate beefburgers as a child. His mother Frances said: "Even if they say there is just a good chance BSE can be passed on to humans they should err on the side of caution."

Michelle Bowen died aged 29 last November three weeks after her

son Tony was born by Caesarean section. She had worked in a butcher's as a teenager.

Her husband Anthony, of Harpurhey, Manchester, said he feared his baby son might also die. "I've spoken to several experts. One in particular believes I have a case against the Government for negligence as they have never really thrown their full weight behind a comprehensive research campaign."

Stephen Churchill, 19, a student from Devizes, Wiltshire, died in May last year 12 months after becoming depressed and dizzy. His

mother Dot told Radio 4's *The World at One*: "We would like to have an independent inquiry. The disease itself is changing. It is attacking younger people. We were told it was a disease of the 50 to 70-year-olds and it isn't any more."

Ann Richardson of Liverpool died aged 41 two months ago. Her husband Ronny is also considering legal action.

Freda Neild, 65, died eight years ago. Her daughter Sandra Gallo-way, 52, a Doncaster nurse who founded the CJD Support Net-work, said: "We need a public inquiry into what is causing these

deaths and if CJD is not caused by eating beef then we need to know what on earth does cause it."

The grave of one young CJD victim was dug to a depth of nine feet last year instead of the usual six. Gravediggers were issued with protective clothes and surgical gloves at the funeral of Maurice Callaghan, 30, of Belfast.

Victoria Rimmer, 18, a kennel worker, of Connah's Quay, Clwyd, was the first teenager diagnosed with CJD. She fell sick in 1994 aged 16 and is still in a deep coma. Her relatives have always blamed hamburgers.

## Ten years on, beef is back under suspicion

BY ANDREW PIERCE

THE ten-year debate over BSE has been marked by confusion, contradiction, warnings against hysteria from meat producers and unwavering reassurance from the Government.

November 1986: BSE identified in cattle by Central Veterinary Laboratory. The condition was thought to have been transferred through consumption of sheep offal infected by scrapie.

April 1988: working party established under Professor Sir Richard Southwood, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University, to assess significance of BSE epidemic.

June 1988: working group's first report recommended that infected animals and their milk be destroyed, BSE be made a notifiable disease, and a research committee be set up to discover extent of threat to animals and humans.

July 1988: Government banned feed products made from ground cattle and sheep remains.

August 1988: ministers ordered slaughter of all BSE-infected livestock.

November 1988: disease made notifiable.

February 1989: publication of Southwood report which said it was "most unlikely that BSE will have implications for human health". The EU banned export of cattle born before July 1988 and offspring of suspect animals.

May 1990: John Gummer, the Agriculture Minister, held press call at which his daughter, aged four, was photographed eating a beefburger. CJD surveillance unit set up in Edinburgh. First announcement of a cat with BSE.

May 1990: the Chief Medical Officer, Sir Donald Acheson, said beef was "absolutely safe to eat". Margaret Thatcher echoed him, saying: "You have got the best scientists working on it."

June 1990: 23 non-EU countries, including Saudi Arabia, banned British beef.

March 1995: Mark Dunca Templeman, a dairy farmer whose livestock had suffered from BSE, died of CJD.

August 1995: death of Stephen Churchill, 19, youngest British BSE victim, disclosed.

September 1995: a third dairy farmer confirmed as latest CJD victim. Councils, including Humberside, banned meat from school canteens.

October 1995: Dr Kenneth Calman, Chief Medical Officer, said: "There is no scientific evidence of a link between meat-eating and CJD."

November 1995: Professor Sir Bernard Tomlinson, an expert on brain disease, said he would not eat beefburgers, beef liver or meat pies and recommended a ban on all meat offal.

December 1995: the professor accused by Angela Browning, junior Agriculture Minister, of not basing his conclusions on scientific evidence. The Advisory Body on Catering for Social Services urged a ban on beef products. Graham Lane, chairman of the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, said: "People are not prepared to accept government assurances at face value."

December 1995: Douglas Hogg, the Agriculture Minister, said he and his family still ate beef despite growing number of schools banning it.

John Major told Commons: "There is currently no scientific evidence that BSE can be transmitted to humans or that eating beef causes it in humans. I am also advised that beef is a safe and wholesome product." Government published advertisements in newspapers saying: "BSE is an animal disease which affects only cattle."

## Risk from eating beef 'no longer zero'

# Subtle differences led scientists to link BSE with humans

BY NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

TEN patients below the age of 42 provided the smoking gun that pointed to a link between mad cow disease and its human equivalent, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease.

Subtle differences in symptoms and in brain pathology enabled the CJD Surveillance Unit at Western General Hospital in Edinburgh to distinguish between these patients and those suffering the normal form of CJD. By doing so, they identified what Stephen Dorrell, the Health Minister, yesterday called "a previously unrecognised and consistent disease pattern".

The patients had an average age of onset of 27, compared with over 63 for the normal form of CJD. The early symptoms of the new form include anxiety and depression, while those of classical CJD in many ways resemble Alzheimer's disease, starting with forgetfulness and uncharacteristic behaviour. In addition, the new form shows signs of developing more slowly. In typical CJD, death follows within

six months of onset, but in the new form sufferers survive for 13 months.

The final distinction is one of pathology. CJD can be diagnosed with complete confidence only after death, by the spongy appearance of the brain tissues under the microscope and the presence of the so-called prion protein in the brain. Dr Robert Will of the CJD unit said that the new strain was charac-

### THE EVIDENCE

terised by larger than normal quantities of this protein. "This was very consistent and very striking," he said.

The assumption is that the cases of CJD in the ten younger patients derived from BSE-contaminated meat eaten between the first appearance of BSE in 1985/86 and the banning in 1989 of the sale of brain and spinal cord. While the advisory committee believes that the risk

from eating beef today is extremely small, nobody can any longer claim that it is zero.

However, the major risk arose between 1986 and 1989, when all beef-eaters may have been exposed to BSE-infected meat. The numbers of infected cattle in those years was fortunately small, totalling no more than about 10,000, as the epidemic slowly gained in strength. (In the peak year after the ban, 36,681 cows were affected.)

So the risk depends on how much of the beef consumed in those years was infected, and how easily the infection can be passed on to man. Neither question can yet be answered. Nor is it possible to say for how long the risk will last for those people who did eat infected meat.

The only comparable situation for which data is available is Kuru, a disease suffered by the Fore highlanders of Papua New Guinea, who until 1960 practised a ritual form of cannibalism. This disease,

### BY-PRODUCTS OF A COW

Main joints: rump, fillet, sirloin, brisket, shin, neck and clod, chuck and blade, middle, fore and prime ribs, silverside, topside, flank, skirt and leg. Food experts agree red muscle beef is less likely to carry BSE than meat made from waste products. However campaigners believe no cut is safer and say household cooking will not destroy BSE agent.

Mechanically Recovered Meat (MRM): the remaining edible tissue removed by a giant stripper and used in pies, burgers, soups, stews, sausages and pastas. The law allows up to 20% beef in a pork sausage. Beef also present in lamb and chicken processed meats. Campaigners claim the risk of infection is greater from these products, made from older cows and stripped carcasses.

Skin, tendons and ligaments: boiled to make gelatin, used in jellies, biscuits, pies, ready meals and sausage skins. Also in capsules, glue, match heads and photographic processes. The prolonged boiling process is assumed to kill BSE, but campaigners say the evidence has not been seen.

Hides: leather, vellum.

Vertebrae: banned from use in MRM. Can be used in gelatin and suet.

Bones: beef bone stock in gravy and stock, including lamb and chicken.

Tallow (beef fat): dripping, casseroles, chicken stews, dumplings and soups.

Beef extract: frankfurters, Peperami.

Elastic: a protein uniting muscle fibres in meat. Moisturiser.

Glycerol: fat product used as flavouring and texture improver.

Keratin: protein in hair, horns and hooves used in shampoos, conditioners and fertilisers.

Lactose: the sugar derived from milk, tablet fillers, sweeteners and carrier for flavouring agents in crisps.

Dairy: milk, cream, cheese, whey yoghurt.

Oleic oil: liquid from pressed tallow, margarines.

Osteonets: solid from pressed tallow, soaps and candle making.

Rennet: extract of calf stomach. Clots milk.

Stearic acid: Organic acid used to soften skin in lipstick, moisturiser, eye shadow.

Stearates: salt of stearic acid, used in body building supplements.

Banned from sale as food: brain, spinal cord, intestines, spleen, tonsils and thymus gland. All banned from sale as food. Government scientists fed brain and spinal cord to laboratory mice, who became infected. Others argue the infection must pass through other parts of body to get to brain, therefore these may be infected.

which may originally have arisen spontaneously, was spread from generation to generation by eating the remains of close relatives.

The average survival for Kuru sufferers was 16 months, considerably longer than for the usual form of CJD but closely similar to the new one. The incubation period for Kuru was in some cases as short as four years, and in others as long as several decades. Although cannibalism stopped in 1960, and nobody is thought to have been infected by the disease after that, people in Papua New Guinea still die of it.

If the new form of CJD follows this pattern, it will be almost the middle of next century before we

can be sure that no more new cases will emerge.

Guessing how many cases there will be is equally impossible. If we are lucky, the "species barrier" will have been high enough for only a few people a year to be infected. If we are not, and the incubation period is long, these first ten deaths may represent the foothills of a rising curve of cases that will not peak for decades.

Food retailers were last night planning a public relations offensive to try to reassure shoppers that British beef products are safe for human consumption. High Street retailers said they would be briefing their staff to cope with an anticipated surge in questions from

customers. They hope an information campaign will avert a catastrophic fall in sales.

In 1985, the year before BSE was identified in cattle, 1.13 million tonnes of beef were consumed in Britain. Last year the figure was 888,000, a drop of 19 per cent.

Manufacturers pledged yesterday to make it crystal clear that beef would be clearly identified as an ingredient in product packaging. Beef can be contained in products as diverse as jelly, wine sauce and chicken broth.

A spokesman for the Meat and Livestock Federation said: "We will have to do a lot of explaining to avoid any hysteria. This will not be good."

## Choose something else for Sunday lunch



### MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttford

Guinea until cannibalism was eradicated 40 years ago.

We now know that BSE crosses the species barrier and now know, contrary to earlier reassurance given to us by experts, that it can be acquired by carnivores.

If cats can catch feline spongiform encephalopathy from eating infected beef products, are we wise to suggest that humans won't?

The incubation period in these diseases is up to 15 years. If

children can be infected by a contaminated hamburger, those who caught it during the early 1980s when the number of cattle involved was small would only now start to become victims.

Previously when asked by patients whether they should eat beef, I have always suggested that they should do so only when it was obvious from which part of the animal it had been taken. I recommended against beef rissoles, cottage pie, beefburgers,

beef extracts and even black pudding, sausages and beef pies. For the past two or three years I have extended this advice by suggesting that patients should avoid beef liver or kidneys or sweetbreads. Until today's report I have continued to enjoy roast beef although I have been careful to leave any lymphatic glands that might be lurking among the meat.

Although it seems likely that only a few people will be affected, I shall in future avoid all beef, whether roasted or minced, until scientists can be truly reassuring. Worthwhile reassurance must include a ministerial resolve not to use that most non-committal phrase "there is no evidence that". ... Until I can tell my patients that "there is evidence that BSE cannot be transmitted to people" I will suggest they choose other joints for their Sunday lunch.



John Gummer and daughter Cordelia enjoying beefburgers

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**By James F.**

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# British man murdered in China's Wild West

By JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING AND BILL FROST

A BRITISH businessman has been murdered in Shenzhen, the increasingly lawless and violent Chinese city on the border with Hong Kong. David Swindells suffered fatal stab wounds during the attack, which is thought to have been carried out by thieves. They are believed to have forced their way into his room at the five-star Shangri-La Hotel shortly after he arrived with a colleague.

Last night his wife said she had often feared that she would never see him again when he embarked on his frequent business trips abroad. "He travelled a lot and I had prepared myself for the fact that one day he might not come back," Joan Swindells said.

"This really hasn't sunk in yet. I am still numb by what has happened but I had this feeling that there might be a time when I would not see him again; that is the sort of dangerous world we live in," she said.

Mr Swindells, 59, was working in Shenzhen as a business consultant for Corning Incorporated, a New York-based computer company. Col-

leagues described him yesterday as "a well-liked and well-respected high achiever".

Kyu Sung, a workmate who travelled with Mr Swindells to China earlier this month, said he had been out sightseeing when his friend was murdered last Sunday. "As I returned to the hotel, I intended to call David, who was on another floor, to invite him to join me for dinner. But then I saw that the lobby was swarming with police and was shocked when they told me that he had been stabbed to death."

The murder comes just days after the British Embassy in Peking issued a warning to travellers of the increased dangers they face in China. "Muggings in main cities, sexual harassment and crime on trains are increasing. Foreigners are regular targets," a spokesman said.

Jamie Houghton, chairman of Corning Incorporated, last night paid tribute to Mr Swindells, who lived at Frilford, near Abingdon, Oxfordshire. "He was very highly regarded within the company. Obviously all David's colleagues are very saddened by this most unfor-



fortunate incident," he said. "This is particularly difficult for me because I worked with David for many years. Our prayers are with his widow and three children."

Mrs Swindells described her husband as "an exceptional man". She added: "David was a lovely and highly intelligent man. He had great integrity, a wonderfully infectious sense of humour and was very erudite and extremely well-read."

Mr Swindells, a politics graduate from New College, Oxford, retired as a full-time employee of Corning Incorporated two years ago. He had been with the company 24 years, rising to vice-president before becoming a freelance consultant.

Last night the business-

man's family was waiting for news of when his body might be returned to Britain. A Foreign Office spokesman said that Chinese police might want a post-mortem examination before authorising the release of the body.

Shenzhen, a poor rural village only two decades ago, has become a "Wild West" boom town after being chosen by the Chinese Government as a testbed for economic reform and a flirtation with capitalism.

Exposure to new freedom has, however, brought near anarchy to the city. Guests fled from one state-run hotel after witnessing rival Triad gangs fighting with knives and meat cleavers in the lobby.

Foreign businessmen are preyed on by prostitutes and muggers who seem to operate with impunity in hotels and see visiting businessmen and women as a ready source of foreign currency.

Anxious at the rising tide of crime in the city, the authorities have recently sought to make an example of those responsible. However, not even posters showing the execution of criminals by firing squad has halted the growth of lawlessness.

## Photographer threatened former model

A PHOTOGRAPHER who pestered a former Page Three model with menacing phone calls when she refused to continue posing for him was jailed for three months yesterday.

Kenneth Bartels, 34, who appeared on the cover of Jilly Cooper's bestseller *Riders*, with more than 800 phone calls and messages on her answering machine, telling her he would wreck her life.

Magistrates at Brighton were told that Bartels, 56, of Crawley, West Sussex, became obsessed with Mrs Storer after she stopped working for him. He admitted making menacing phone calls.

## City bank turns to Yorkshire for touch of Zen

By JOE JOSEPH

A FORMER foundry worker from Yorkshire who has turned himself into an unlikely tub-thumper for Zen Buddhism and Taoist philosophy has convinced City financiers that they, too, can benefit from his motivation.

Standard Chartered, the British-based bank with operations in Asia and Africa, has just hired Sid Joynson of Castleford, West Yorkshire, to instil team-minded Japanese spirit of *kaizen*, or continuous improvement, into 90 backroom clerical staff in its London office.

Mr Joynson, 54, whose clients include Hoppoint, Barclaycard, Powergen and British Aerospace, became a convert to Japanese factory methods after visiting Tokyo eight years ago.

"I teach people how the Japanese really run their factories," he said yesterday while running a two-day, £2,400 workshop for a paintbrush firm in Belfast.

"It's a brutal and direct approach to life, but it's also supportive and caring. I get people wound up and enthusiastic, but also give them some very specific tools and techniques."

The novelty is not just that the one-man-band Mr Joynson is a far cry from accountants and management consultants, but that his notion of teamwork is traditionally alien to the City, where a Darwinian struggle in the dealing room secures the fastest salary and the sleekest company cars.

Standard Chartered said it was beginning to use "team-builders" throughout its organisation. Chris Sykes, the bank's operations manager, believes Mr Joynson might be the man "to improve our operations by moving to a greater degree of team spirit and empowerment". He also says that Mr Joynson "is not for the faint-hearted", being a man who likes referring to



Sid Joynson is a far cry from the usual consultant. Respect for every worker is the key, he says

the CBI as "Complete Bloody Idiots" and winces at companies' "Mickey Mouse" rules that belittle people. He urges managers to smile more, praise more and perform acts of random kindness.

"Respect, treating people as experts, whether they are the toilet cleaner or the managing director, that's the key. All I do for a living is go into an organisation and tap into the wisdom that's already there. A good general puts his troops first, and loses the battle."

Mr Joynson says that too many managers show their staff not TLC (tender loving

care) but TDC — thinly disguised contempt. He argues that bosses and management consultants who think they can improve profits by shedding staff not only ruin their companies but have been responsible for killing off British manufacturing industry.

"Everywhere I go I've got heroes waiting for me. But I'm the first person who's told them they're heroes."

Word of mouth has filled Mr Joynson's diary and his wallet: "I make a fortune. I can do free workshops with Dr Barnardo's because I'm rich."

Leading article, page 21

## Swindling bigamist Casanova jailed for 4½ years

AN AGEING and overweight Casanova who swindled the women he seduced was jailed for 4½ years yesterday.

Nicholas Leonardo, 56, a multimillionaire bigamist, was still married to his fourth wife, was having an affair with his secretary, and was engaged to a deputy bank manager he had led into a life of crime when he was arrested in 1994.

The court was told that the offences Leonardo had admitted involved £2 million. However, police are convinced he dishonestly obtained about £3.5 million in Britain alone. The court was told it was not possible to prove his true identity.

Kingsbridge Crown Court in central London was told how Leonardo, who once ran off with a £250,000 jewellery collection after telling a Swiss dealer he was engaged to Christina Onassis, carefully selected his victims. Often armed with information uncovered by private investigators he had hired, the accomplished linguist would charm them with proclamations of love and tales of his wealth. One of his victims, Maria Seymour, a Mexican-born divorcee, handed over her savings after he told her that he had served in the Cabinet of King Constantine of Greece.

Patricia Flynn, the woman bank official, was persuaded into defrauding the Midland Bank of £133,000. When her employers became suspicious, Leonardo effectively imprisoned Miss Flynn, taking her to Spain, America and Greece to prevent her talking. She was eventually arrested and jailed for three years.

The court was told that Leonardo would invent excuses when his victims questioned his behaviour. He once claimed that he had been blown up by an IRA bomb.

Greek-born Leonardo also defrauded financial institutions — in one case obtaining a mortgage advance of £790,000.

Passing sentence, Judge Horden told Leonardo, who admitted 11 sample counts of theft and deception between 1987 and 1993, that his betrayal of Mrs Seymour's trust was "extremely serious", and the way he had swindled his secretary, Jayshree Kaval, showed "extreme meanness". He said she should receive £6,000 compensation while Mrs Seymour should receive the remainder of the £50,000 confiscation order.

The judge added: "It is quite clear that your presence in this country is a detriment to it and I recommend you should be deported after you have served your sentence."

## Skiing crash kills Pears biographer

By BILL FROST

THE biographer of Peter Pears has been killed in a skiing accident in the French Alps. Christopher Headington, who was also a composer and teacher, crashed heading into a tree while out with a class at the resort of Les Houches in the Chamonix valley.

A police spokesman said of the accident, which happened on Tuesday: "It was really bad luck. He could have broken an arm or a leg, but unfortunately his head took the full impact."

In his 1992 biography of Pears,

Headington, 65, who lived in Newton Abbot, Devon, charmed the singer's love affair with Benjamin Britten.

The biography, however, met with mixed reviews. Max Loppert, writing in the *Financial Times*, said the book was "a dogged disappointment". He concluded that Headington, who knew Pears and Britten well, had sought to avoid controversy.

No mean composer himself, Headington's works included a ballet, performed in Paris and Edinburgh in 1957, choral music, two string quartets, two piano sonatas, a piano quartet, a cello

sonata and three song cycles. He taught music in schools until 1964, when he joined the BBC as a senior assistant in music presentation. The following year he was appointed tutor in music at the Oxford University Delegacy for Extramural Studies.

He appeared frequently on television and radio music programmes and published a *History of Western Music* in 1974.

His later musical compositions drew much praise. They were described by one critic as "bold in construction, free and more positive in declaring themselves emotionally".

## Mutinous talk stirs tempers at Bligh auction

By TIM JONES

MORE than 200 years after the infamous mutiny, the descendants of Captain William Bligh, master of the ill-fated *HMS Bounty*, and Fletcher Christian are still at war. Yesterday, as a treasure trove of memorabilia charting the voyage and its consequences fetched £130,000 at auction, they remained divided over whether the great navigator was a tyrant or a maligned national hero.

Maurice Bligh was in no doubt that his great, great-grandfather had been slighted through the decades and unfairly turned into an historical ogre. Mr Bligh, an author, has spent more than 25 years trying to clear the captain's name and hopes soon to publish a book which he says, will accurately depict him in a kindly light.

He said: "He has been portrayed in a totally unfair way and is unrecognisable from the man he really was. Instead of being regarded as a

tyrant, he should be fitted as a national hero." Mr Bligh, 52, was scathing about Stephen Walters, whose collection was being sold at the auction at Bonhams. He said: "I have a few bones to pick with him. He was adviser to the 1984 film *The Bounty* which starred Anthony Hopkins and was based on the worst anti-Bligh novel ever written."

Mr Walters, an historical adviser, paid tribute to Bligh's skills as a navigator and husband of men. "I don't think he was as bad as is sometimes painted but he did not suffer fools gladly and rallied against people who did not follow his commands."

Ewan Christian, a distant cousin of Fletcher Christian, who led the mutiny and sailed the *Bounty* to Pitcairn Island, refused to accept that Captain Bligh was not a harsh and cruel man. He said: "There were two mutinies against him, one on sea, the other on land so clearly there was something wrong with the man. I do not see him as a hero and back Fletcher in his actions."

Although the three men attended the auction in Knightsbridge, after the collection was sold they stood well apart and did not speak to one another.

The most valuable work to be auctioned, *An Account of the Mutinous Seizure of the Bounty*, derived from Bligh's own account of the mutiny, fetched £10,925. An album relating to Peter Heywood, at 15, the youngest mutineer, made £7,475.



Bligh: defended by his relative yesterday

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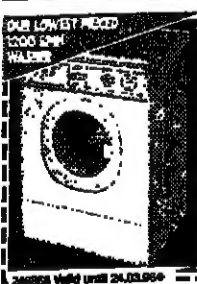
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**By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT**

Peter Bessant welcomes back a wild boar to the New Forest, not seen since his great-grandfather shot the last in 1905

**BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT**

Fifteen years ago there were virtually no wild boars being farmed and only a handful in zoos. Mr Dauncey, whose farm supplies boar meat to Harrods, said the last indigenous wild boar was killed in Staffordshire in 1593. The beast shot 90 years ago by Mr Bessant was the last of a failed 1850 reintroduction from Germany.

**BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR**

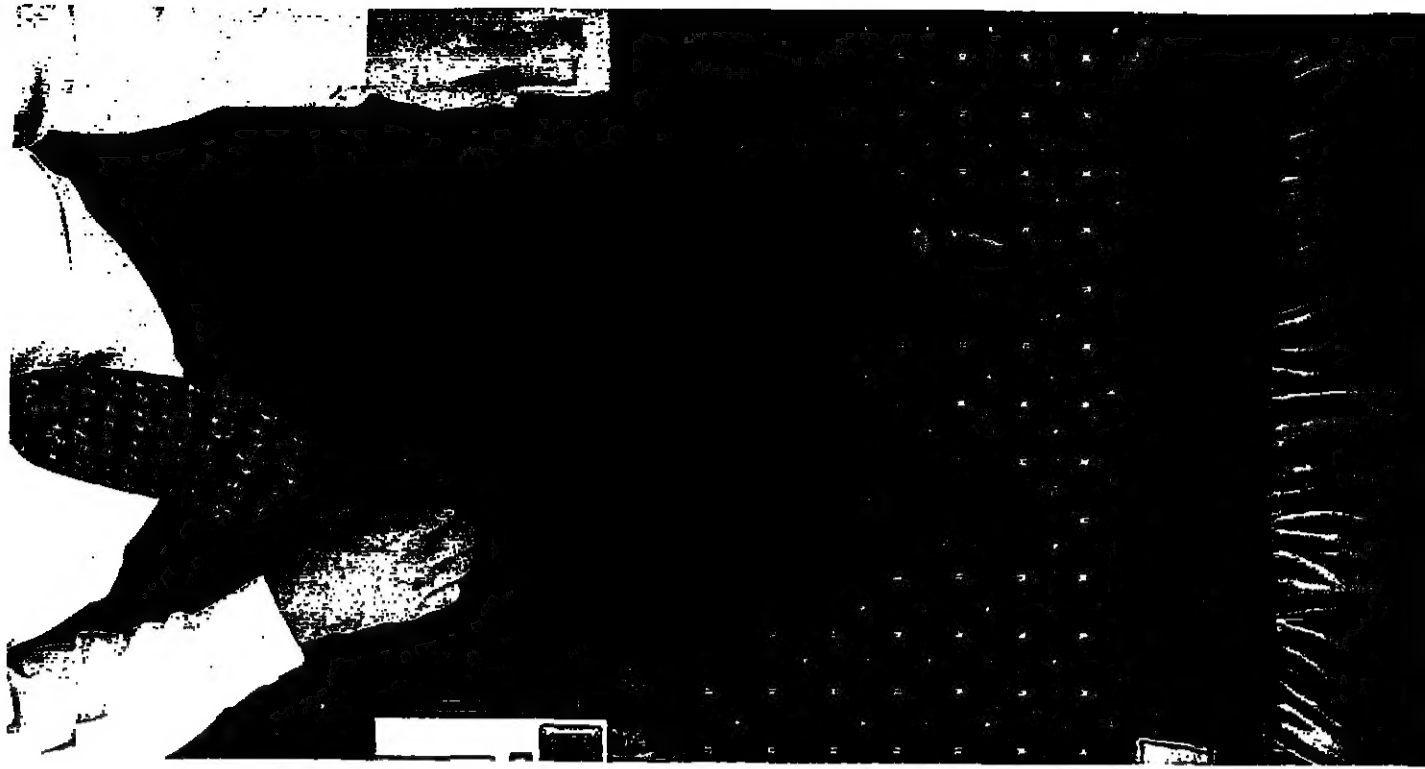
Susan Stobbs, who chairs Cambridge's admissions forum, said: "We have benefited from coming top of a number of league tables, and a lot of hard work has been put into encouraging more state school pupils to apply. But the Oxford examination obviously was also a factor."

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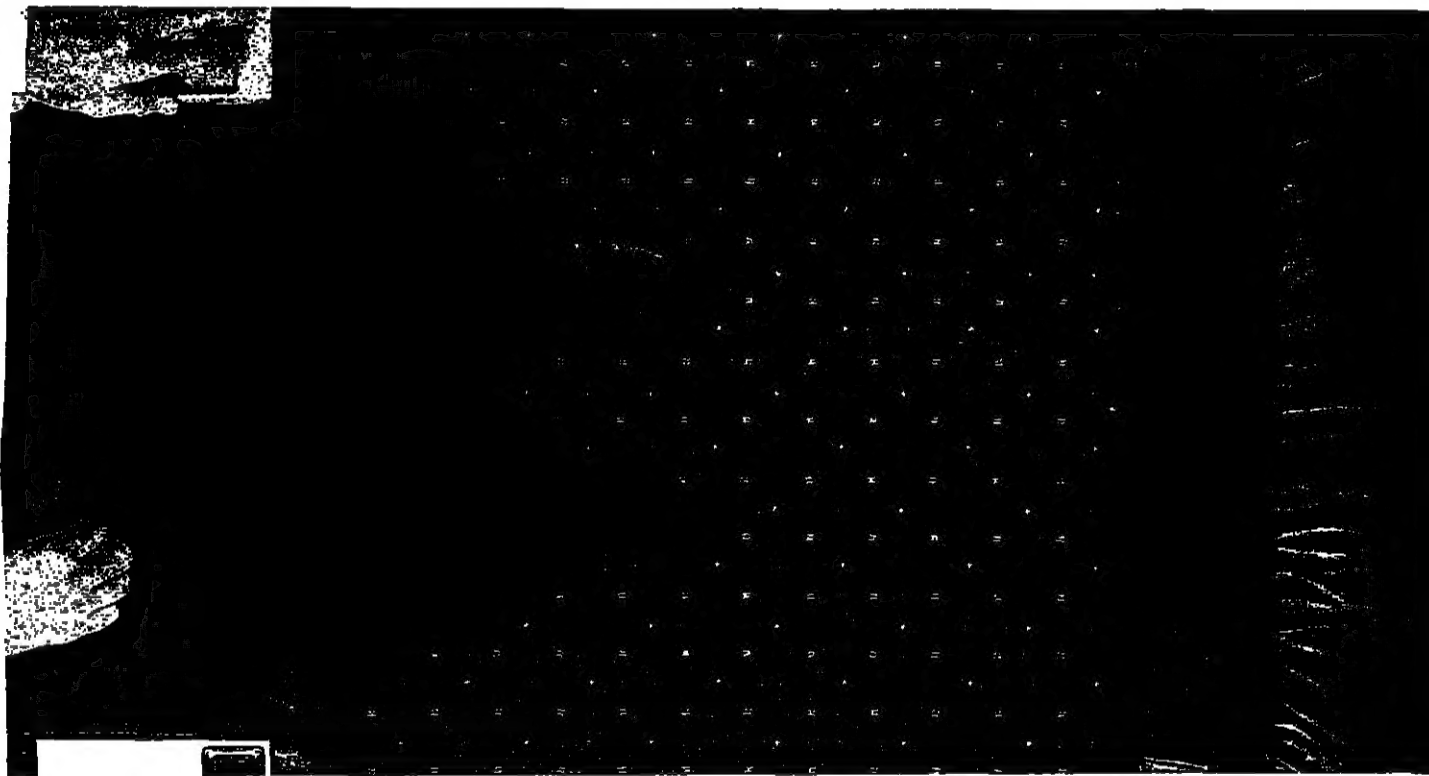
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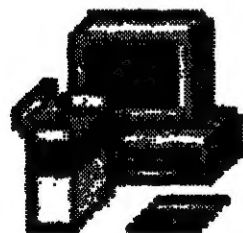
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Tory schools policy a vote-loser, says Blair

# Major condemned for 'harking back to 11-plus system'

By Jill Sherman, Political Correspondent

TONY BLAIR rejected a return to the 11-plus system yesterday as John Major called for greater selection in thousands of schools.

The Labour leader argued that the Government's approach, effectively a return to the 11-plus, was not a vote-winner. He said that on education the Prime Minister was moving the Tories out of the centre ground and wanted to switch the clock back.

"It would be a mistake for this country to go back to the 11-plus, where you divided children into successes and failures and eighty per cent of them ended up classified as failures," Mr Blair said.

Later Mr Major heralded plans to extend selection from grant-maintained schools to church schools, local authority comprehensives and specialist schools. "In our schools and colleges I want the gates thrown open and ladders let down. Good education should be for the many, not just the few," he said.

"I never had the chance to go to university, and neither did many of my generation. I'm proud that today's young

people aren't shut out of these opportunities."

In a speech to the Social Market Foundation, Mr Major again attacked Harriet Harman's decision to send her child to a grammar school in defiance of party policy.

"Labour wouldn't give those parents, who face the appalling prospect of sending their children to failing schools run by Labour councils, the choice of schools in other areas — unless, of course, they sit in the Shadow Cabinet," he said.

"They wouldn't give bright children from disadvantaged backgrounds the chance to go to private schools — denying them the education some Labour politicians enjoyed."

Mr Major said that he planned more announcements in the next few weeks and claimed that education was the first vital step on the road to providing choice and freedom. "I want children to get above themselves. I want our youngsters to follow their own skills and ambitions, and not be confined by artificial barriers and outdated social conventions."

Mr Blair also highlighted

the differences between the two parties over the Assisted Places Scheme. At last year's Tory party conference Mr Major promised to double the number of assisted places at independent schools. Labour is pledged to phasing out the scheme and using the money saved to reduce class sizes.

"It's extraordinary that the Prime Minister's only real new idea is greater subsidy through the Assisted Places Scheme for private education," Mr Blair said on BBC Radio 4's *World at One*. "The Labour party is prepared to say we are the party that will modernise the comprehensive system and give people real diversity and choice within it."

Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, said that Mr Blair was fundamentally wrong. The Government had raised standards, widened opportunity, choice and diversity and was "now beginning to understand that successful policy is part of an election-winning strategy".

Mr Blair was asked whether



Ms Harman, the Shadow Health Secretary, might lose her seat on the Shadow Cabinet and the National Executive Committee as a result of the controversy over her grammar school decision, and whether she should simply resign now.

Mr Blair defended Ms Harman but offered no guarantee about her future. "Let's

see what happens," he said. "I don't believe she should step down from either. I believe that people who have seen Harriet perform and knock lumps off Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell and government ministers on the health service are very, very supportive of her."

## Think-tank urges tax breaks on old age insurance

By Nicholas Wood, Chief Political Correspondent

THE over-50s should be given tax breaks to encourage them to insure against the costs of long-term residential or nursing care, a leading Tory think-tank proposes today.

Tax allowances of £180 a year for men and £250 for women are proposed as ministers prepare to announce their own ideas for dealing with one of the hottest items in the Government's in-tray.

Ministers are under pressure from middle-class voters alarmed to discover that John Major's objective of "wealth cascading down the generations" is jeopardised by the rising costs of long-term care.

Growing numbers of elderly people are being forced to sell their homes to meet fees for residential or nursing care because the present means tests for state help are so strict. But those who make no provision for their old age are looked after free of charge.

One estimate suggests that the bill could reach £30 billion — four times the present level — in 35 years, placing a big new burden on the next generation of taxpayers.

The new paper, published by Politeia and widely circulated in Whitehall, supports tax breaks as the best way to encourage people to provide for their old age and to spare the taxpayer. The author, Philip Booth, a senior lecturer in actuarial science at City University, says that the best answer is to give a special tax allowance to people in the 50-65 age bracket taking out insurance. The allowance would be pitched to cover all or part of their care, rather than accommodation costs.

"The finance of long-term care for the elderly is a problem which needs tackling," he writes. "The present system is widely perceived to be unfair, and the Government is seen as confiscating the hard-earned savings and valued assets of the thrifty..."

"Although government would continue to provide free care for those who pass the means test, the uncertainty of most people as to whether in 20 or 30 years' time they would pass or fail such a test would ensure a high take-up of even a partial allowance."

A government Green Paper to be published around Easter will propose another formula, so-called partnership schemes under which people insure themselves for a pre-set level of fees and, if the money runs out, turn to the State for help.

Mr Booth says that formula would appear to redistribute funds towards people who would have paid their own way. It could also prove more expensive than his scheme.

□ *The long-term view: financing care for the elderly* (Politeia, 28 Charing Cross Rd, London WC2H 0DH; £5)

## Lower tax central to Tory campaign

By Nicholas Wood

JOHN MAJOR promised lower taxes, tight control of public spending, and a recovery in the housing market yesterday as he rallied his party for the battle to come with Labour.

The Prime Minister outlined his campaign plans after the Cabinet spent nearly an hour in political session preparing for a conference next week on winning a fifth term.

The theme of the Central Council meeting in Harrogate, to be attended by the party's most senior activists, will be the Government's plans to take Britain into the next century. Speakers, who will include Michael Heseltine, Kenneth Clarke, and the Mr Major, have been asked to hint at new policies to come.

In a speech to the Social Market Foundation at Westminster, Mr Major said that while the Tories were the party of opportunity, Labour was the party of opportunism. "I want people to get on. I want them to believe that, if they have the talent and the application, there's nothing they can't achieve."

That meant giving people the freedom and encouragement to take responsibility for their own lives. He wanted to give people more chances to choose schools for their children, to move off benefits into work, to own shares and property and to keep more of the money they earned.

"We're now back on our tax-cutting agenda giving people the opportunity to spend or save more of what they earn. We want to cut taxes further and that means controlling public spending..."

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## MPs have much to learn from Nolan and Scott

Parliament is not working well. That is not only the view of the public in polls and of many wiser MPs in private, but also of two eminent judges — Lord Nolan and Sir Richard Scott — who have spent a good deal of time studying the workings of the political system. Neither exactly endeared himself to many MPs, particularly Tories. But their reflections on the failings of Parliament, in speeches over the past week, are telling.

The real issue is not sleaze or personal scandal, but ineffectiveness. Lord Nolan is a friendly, even supportive, critic, who believes that the decline in public confidence in the standards of conduct of MPs is not justified by the evidence and that we have sound institutions of which we should be proud.

Much has been made of the decision of many, mainly Tory, MPs to stand down at the next election and the Nolan proposals have often been blamed. But even in the form adopted by the Commons these only affect a narrow area of paid outside interests. Lord Nolan's impression is that the disenchantment of MPs reflects a combination of the difficulties faced by the Commons in supervising the executive, the delay in examining the salaries and expenses of MPs, and the intrusion into private life which public life now entails. All are valid. The Government made a mistake in not ensuring that MPs' pay was reviewed at the same time as the new controls on outside earnings were introduced.

But the basic cause of MPs' disillusionment is their loss of influence, let alone power, particularly when compared with the American Congress. Referring to the inquiry's current work, Lord Nolan pointed to "a great increase in the number and diversity of bodies of all sizes and types which are delivering public services

### RIDDELL ON POLITICS

and whose lines of accountability run upwards through ministers — and sometimes as in the case of regulators not through ministers — to Parliament. Yet Parliament is inadequately resourced for bringing all those bodies to account. Indeed in many cases I doubt whether it is possible or practicable for Parliament to bring local quangos to account. Moreover, despite a genuine commitment to greater openness, there remains a "continuing cult of secrecy" which persists in parts of Whitehall, as is still shown in parliamentary answers. Consequently, he argues that MPs "would obtain much greater job satisfaction if they were able to find ways of more effectively bringing the government machine to account".

This general charge was reinforced this week by Sir Richard Scott. He argued that the continuation of export control orders introduced as a wartime emergency in 1939 — which were at the heart of his report — "is a story not only of an abuse of executive power but also of a failure by Parliament". The abuse of executive power by both Conservative and Labour administrations and the failure of Parliament to act "gave substance to the charge that the constitution has become an elective dictatorship".

The root problem uncovered by both Nolan and Scott is the inadequate performance of the Commons and the frustrations of MPs.

The primary function of the Commons at present is as a recruitment agency for the executive and its shadow. One result is to undermine the other roles of the Commons in scrutinising the executive. As William Wade pointed out in a speech to the Social Market Foundation on Tuesday, "both Houses now very often mesh with pressure groups to force up [public] spending and thereby to increase the power of the executive. The old Parliamentary tradition, of suspicion of the executive and its desire to spending, is in danger of withering".

Sir Richard might smile at the source of this advice. But Parliament, as well as the Government, has much to learn from the Nolan and Scott inquiries.

PETER RIDDELL

### IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: backbench debates; education and employment questions; two statements on local issues; Reserve Forces Bill second reading; City of Westminster Bill, revised motion; In the Lords: effect of government economic strategy on British people's wellbeing; Restaurants (Smoking and Cover Charges) Bill, committee.

TODAY in the Commons: questions to Northern Ireland ministers and the Prime Minister; debate on the European inter-governmental conference; backbench debate on lobby beneficiaries in west Suffolk; In the Lords: Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, second reading; Deer (Amendment) (Scotland) Bill, report.

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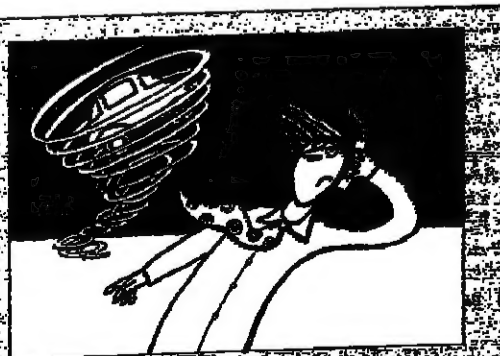
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## Law reformers demand tougher controls on rented property

BY FRANCES GIBBS  
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

LANDLORDS should be forced by law to keep rented properties fit for human habitation, according to the Law Commission. It says that more than a fifth of private rented accommodation in England, and more than a quarter in Wales, is not fit to live in.

In a report on the relationship between landlord and tenant, the commission, the Government's law reform body, points out that at present the law is powerless to force landlords to keep their properties in a habitable state. Many people rented properties on the understanding that the landlord would carry out repairs, but the obligation was limited to making good physical deterioration.

"This means that a property can be unfit for human habitation even though it is not in disrepair — a common case is where the unfitness is caused by condensation," the Commission says.

If a house in London is unfit for human habitation, the tenant can sue the landlord only if the annual rent is less

than £80; outside London the figure is £52. These rent limits have remained almost unchanged since 1957.

If the lease of business premises does not provide for their repair, the law presumes that no one was intended to be responsible, which can make it impossible for either landlord or tenant to force the other to halt the deterioration of the property.

The commission says that, even where there are remedies, they are limited. If one party is under an obligation to repair the premises, the other

may not always be able to compel him or her to do so and claim for damages. Similarly, courts have a statutory power to compel specific repair work, but that power is limited to a landlord's covenants to repair dwellings. Tenants are under a duty to behave in a tenant-like manner and not to commit waste, but it is often unclear what that means.

The report recommends reforms to tackle the problems and simplify the law. It proposes a new code of obli-

gations that would require landlords to repair and maintain leasehold property. Subject to limited exceptions, it would be a condition of every residential lease granted for less than seven years that the landlord should keep the premises fit for human habitation. In other cases, the parties would agree their own terms.

Unless the parties agreed otherwise or there was a specific statute to the contrary, the landlord would be responsible for keeping the let premises in repair and it would no longer be possible

for both landlord and tenant to escape responsibility.

The courts would be able to require compliance with any repairing covenant, whether by landlord or tenant, if it thought that was the appropriate remedy.

Unless the parties agreed otherwise, all tenants and licensees would be under an obligation to take proper care of the premises. The "archaic" law of waste and the uncertain duty to be "tenant-like" should be abolished.

Charles Harpum, Law Commissioner, said that the proposals would simplify and modernise the law and help to improve rented property.

"The right to residential housing that is fit for human habitation meets an obvious social need that is as pressing now as it has always been," he said. The right had been given by Parliament more than a century ago and it benefited a majority of residential tenants until the rent limits made it meaningless in the 1960s.

Landlord and Tenant: Responsibility for State and Condition of Property (Law Com No 238). Stationery Office: £20.40



Bruce Grobbelaar arriving at court yesterday

## Footballers hear charges that they fixed matches

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

ALLEGATIONS of match-fixing involving corrupt payments of more than £60,000 were outlined by the Crown Prosecution Service yesterday.

Bruce Grobbelaar, the Southampton goalkeeper; Hans Segers, the Wimbledon keeper; and John Fashanu, the former England and Aston Villa striker, appeared in court charged with conspiring with Heng Suan Lin, a Malaysian businessman, improperly to influence the outcome of games.

The hearing at Eastleigh Magistrates' Court will decide whether they should be committed to the Crown Court for trial. The four men arrived separately and spoke only to confirm their identities and to say that they understood the charges. Reporting restrictions were not lifted.

All four men are charged with conspiring together between February 1, 1991, and March 15, 1995 — together with others known and unknown — "corruptly to give and corruptly to accept gifts of money as inducements to influence the outcome of football matches or as rewards for

having done so". Grobbelaar, 38, the former Liverpool goalkeeper, is also accused of corruptly accepting £40,000 from Fashanu on November 25, 1993, while still playing for Liverpool, for having influenced the outcome of a match between Newcastle United and Liverpool four days earlier.

The Zimbabwean international goalkeeper is also charged with corruptly accepting £2,000 from Christopher Vincent, his former business partner, as an inducement or reward for improperly influencing the outcome of a football match or matches on November 3, 1994.

Fashanu, 32, the host of the ITV programme *Gladiators*, is accused of corruptly giving Segers £19,000 as a reward for having improperly influenced the result of the Wimbledon v. Liverpool match on October 22, 1994. Segers, 34, is accused of corruptly accepting £19,000 from Fashanu.

All four men were granted conditional bail. The hearing, which is expected to last at least four days, continues.



Heng, Segers and Fashanu: are jointly accused

## Mistakes in jobless benefit near £100m

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY

MISTAKES in unemployment benefit now cost the taxpayer more than fraudulent claims, the National Audit Office reports today. Errors totalled £97 million in 1994-95, more than double the previous year, compared with an estimated £86 million in dishonest claims.

The Audit Office found that 3.8 per cent of the unemployment benefit awards it examined in 1994-95 were wrong. It estimated that £72 million was overpaid while £25 million was underpaid. That accounted for 7.5 per cent of the £1.3 billion budget, almost double the previous year's figure of 3.9 per cent and higher than in all but two of the past seven years.

Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, said the true figure for errors could be up to £121 million because the figures were only estimates based on samples.

Three quarters of the mistakes were the fault of the Employment Service and a quarter were due to incorrect information provided by the unemployed.

The main cause of the increase in errors last year was a failure by staff to check whether claimants had exhausted their entitlement to unemployment benefit. Other errors included payments to people who were unavailable for work or had failed to make enough National Insurance contributions.

## Cambridge students take dim view of cuts

BY ADRIAN LEE

A PROPOSAL to switch off one in eight street lights to save money in Cambridge has angered students who fear they will be more vulnerable to late-night attacks. The measure comes at a time when police are fighting to control a surge in street crime.

Cambridgeshire County Council, which will discuss the measure today, said the savings would amount to £160,000 a year as part of budget cuts of £1.8 million. But student leaders described the move as disastrous and said it would put undergraduates in danger. "Many students live in outlying areas which are already poorly lit," said Nick Forbes, president of the students' union. "Students are easy targets and this is pretty disastrous."

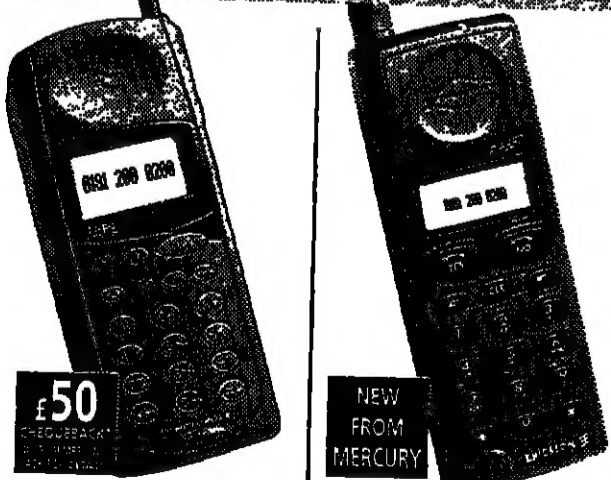
Traditional "town versus gown" resentment results in frequent assaults on students. Two were recently set upon by a gang using baseball bats and, in the past eight months, 32 students have been mugged in Cambridge by gangs who prey on young people, often forcing them to withdraw money from cash machines.

Ashleigh Williamson, the former president of Trinity College students' union, said: "This is a ridiculous proposal. Attacks are on the increase. There are a lot of dark alleys in Cambridge and some of the routes used by students will now be virtually pitch black."

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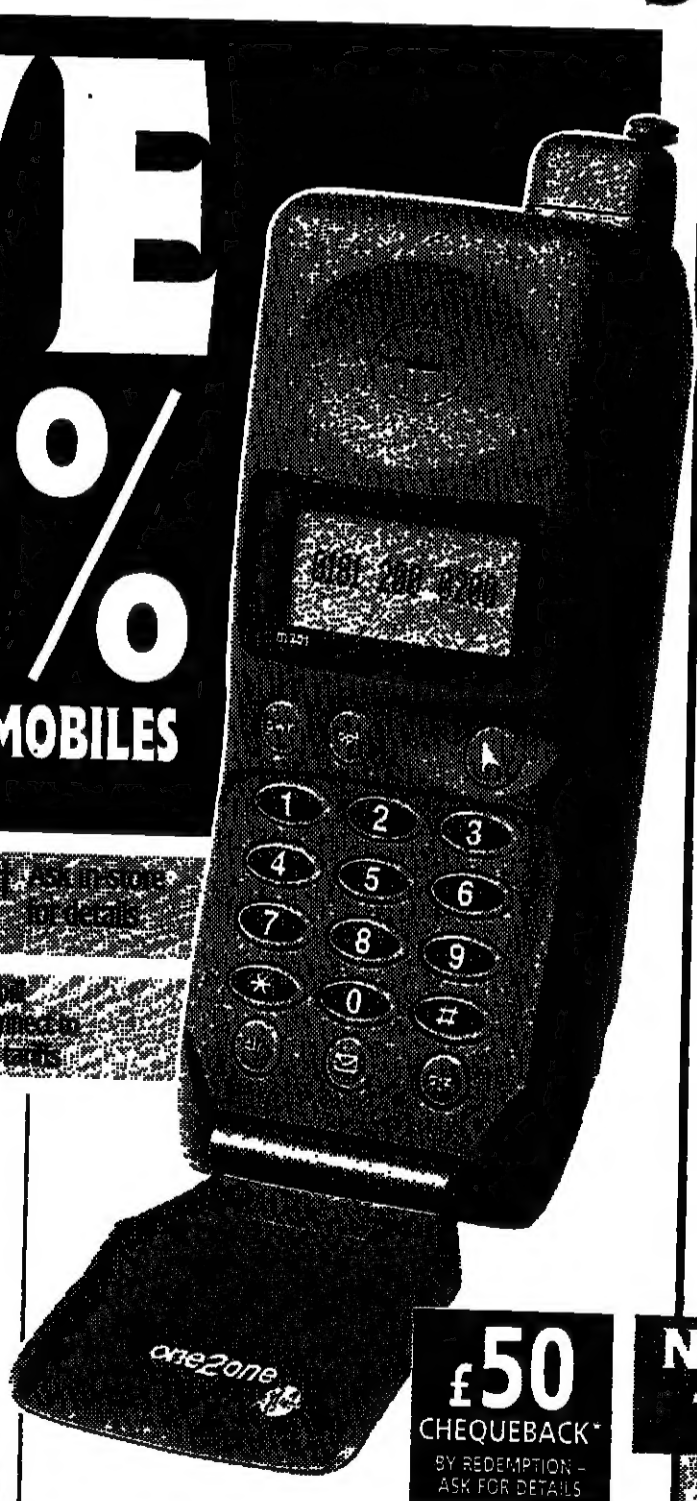
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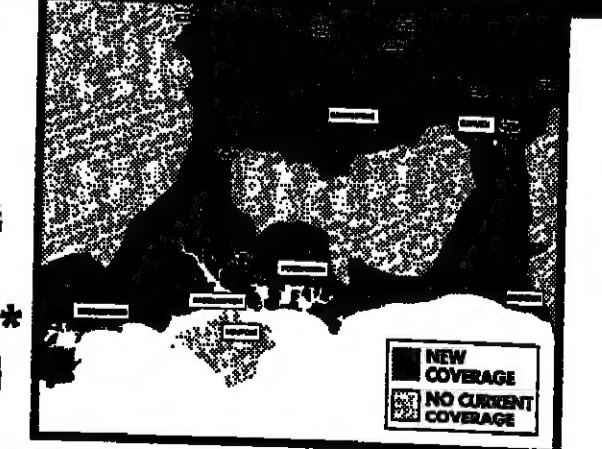
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# League tables show councils are complacent about performance

REPORTS BY IAN MURRAY  
COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

LOCAL authorities are remarkably complacent about the efficient delivery of basic services, according to the second annual local authority performance tables published today by the Audit Commission, the public spending watchdog.

While those councils which performed worst last year have improved, the overwhelming majority have made little progress. "A big message to emerge is that councils really need to be more ambitious and start trying to do better," Andrew Foster, the Controller of the commission, said. "It is not enough to be just average. Everyone can and should improve."

The figures, covering everything from recycling rubbish to rent collection and care of the elderly, show that neither political control nor prosperity guarantees good performance.

Most councils provide a majority of services to a high

**A TALE OF TWO COUNCILS**

Tewkesbury Gloucestershire	Barnack & Thetford Northamptonshire
68	30
15.1	6.9
66	95
46	73
79.2	43.6
£21.72	£16.14
53	100
1.5	11.3

average level, but there are still wide variations between the best and worst performers for similar services provided by comparable authorities. No clear pattern emerges. Poor councils in deprived inner cities sometimes perform better in some departments than wealthy authorities in prosperous shires.

However, the figures show clearly that identical services in comparable councils can be delivered to very different standards. "The accident of which council area you happen to live in can have very

serious implications," according to Paul Veevers, who led the commission team compiling the figures.

No Conservative flagship, Labour stronghold or Liberal Democrat bridgehead can claim to be perfect. Departments in some hung councils could give object lessons in good practice to authorities with solid political leadership.

Parties will therefore have to be highly selective if they use the figures in the looming local election campaign, because good indicators in one department are often cancelled out by bad indicators in another.

Roger Freeman, the Public Services Minister, said the indicators showed that council could no longer get away with waste and inefficiency. "Many councils used not to collect this information for their own use, let alone publish it and be judged by their residents," he said. "This is open government at the service of the consumer."

Labour said that it intended to use the indicators to identify councils in need of help. The party has already said that it will send hit-teams of council

management experts to authorities in difficulty.

Because the figures are a year old, covering the 12 months that ended last April, authorities with bad marks are already claiming that they have made big improvements. They include Lambeth, the London borough with one of the worst records, which has been under new management for the past year.

The average returns for the five least-efficient London boroughs, metropolitan councils, district and county authorities all show marked improvements. The worst group is 110 per cent better at processing council tax benefit claims within 14 days and 63 per cent better at paying student grants on time. They have cut the average time to relet a council home from 14 weeks to ten weeks and cut the average stay of a homeless family in bed-and-breakfast accommodation from 46 weeks to 26.

The worst performers, however, are still languishing at the foot of most tables. With

Environment Secretary, said that the Conservatives had pushed up council tax in the hope that Labour would get the blame because it controlled so many authorities.

"Over the next three years the Government hopes to force council taxpayers to cough up an extra £3.5 billion, equal to an extra 2p on income tax."

David Rendel, the Liberal Democrat spokesman on local government, criticised the Government for using Band D as the average. "This does not take into account the larger share of properties in higher council tax bands in the few remaining councils under their [the Conservatives'] control," he said. "The Government's budget has put local authorities under tremendous pressure to raise more money locally."

Residents in metropolitan authorities will pay an extra 6.8 per cent and district householders will have to find an extra 5.9 per cent.

Frank Dobson, the Shadow

## How to compare levels of service

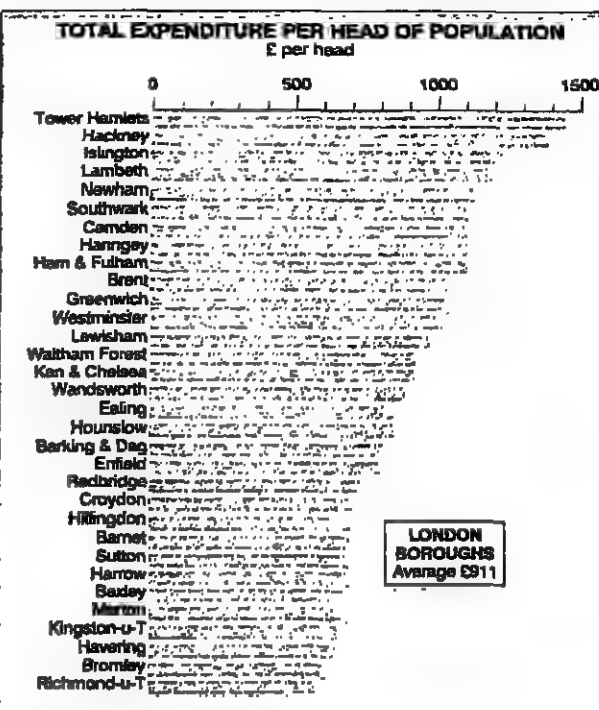
COUNCIL taxpayers can judge the value for money provided by their council by using today's statistics to compare authorities across England and Wales.

The tables disclose how the amount each council spends on every resident varies widely, with costs inevitably higher in London and urban areas. They also show that services do not necessarily improve if councils spend more. Tower Hamlets spends £1,453 per head, the highest anywhere, yet its performance lags behind South-

work, which pays out £320 a year less per head.

The indicators are to be published annually and this second series makes it possible for the first time to see if councils are improving their performance.

What improvements there are have largely been minimal, except among those authorities which were performed badly last year. The Audit Commission believes that the publication of the figures has been enough to inspire those councils to make a greater effort.



## EXTRA SPENDING VARIES BY DISTRICT

IN ADDITION to the amount spent by shires on education and social services, districts spend more on services such as housing and refuse collection. The extra amount spent per head by districts varies within counties as follows:	
<b>North</b>	<b>South East</b>
Cheshire: £109 - £73	Berkshire: £142 - £72
Cleveland: £144 - £103	East Sussex: £145 - £89
Cumbria: £122 - £88	Essex: £158 - £82
Durham: £124 - £83	Kent: £123 - £74
Humbly Grove: £136 - £72	Surrey: £103 - £79
Lancashire: £154 - £77	West Sussex: £118 - £79
Northamptonshire: £111 - £87	
North Yorkshire: £113 - £84	
<b>Midlands</b>	<b>West</b>
Derbyshire: £108 - £81	Avon: £142 - £75
Leicestershire: £188 - £54	Corwall: £110 - £94
Lincolnshire: £120 - £80	Devon: £126 - £88
Northamptonshire: £146 - £72	Dorset: £119 - £74
Nottinghamshire: £107 - £71	Gloucestershire: £105 - £47
Shropshire: £112 - £74	Hampshire: £134 - £74
Staffordshire: £112 - £74	Isle of Wight: £114 - £107
<b>Central</b>	<b>Welsh Districts</b>
Bedfordshire: £132 - £74	Clyd: £159 - £127
Buckinghamshire: £118 - £72	Dwyd: £175 - £126
Cambridgeshire: £122 - £43	Gwent: £198 - £129
Hereford & Wores: £105 - £74	Gwynedd: £224 - £163
	Mid Glamorgan: £226 - £139
	Powys: £151 - £132
	South Glamorgan: £135 - £133
	West Glamorgan: £176 - £131

## Tax bills will rise by 6% as town halls cut costs to appease voters

AVERAGE council tax in England and Wales will rise by 6.2 per cent next month, much less than the Government had predicted, after authorities decided to hold down costs rather than upset voters with steep increases.

The figure is 2 per cent lower than the Government estimated last year when it announced the level of support for local authorities. It has been held so low only by pruning £500 million of services, making more than 6,000 council workers redundant while dipping deep into remaining reserves.

The increase was announced yesterday in a written answer by David Curry, the Local Government Minister. He said the increase would raise the bill for a middle-range Band D property

**AVERAGE BILLS**

Councils	1995-96	1996-97	% increase
England	£541.81	£571.00	5.4
Conservative	£529.48	£555.55	4.9
Independent	£528.07	£556.38	4.7
Labour	£521.50	£540.70	3.7
Lib Dem	£569.80	£581.27	1.9
Plaid	£562.07	£581.61	3.5

to £647. The rise would be highest, at 10.4 per cent, in inner London, and lowest, at 5.1 per cent in outer London.

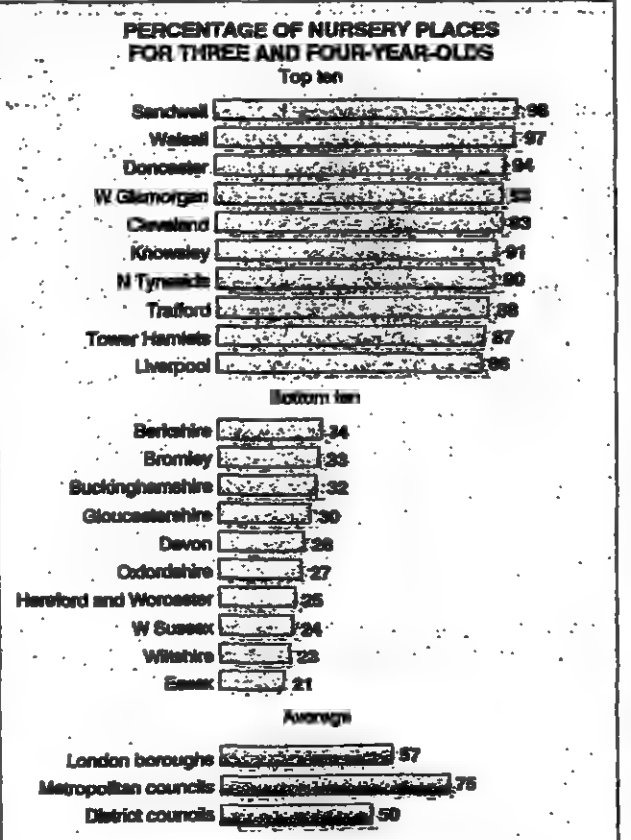
However, very few councils are levying the average figure and many, especially Labour ones in inner-city areas, have been forced to raise their levels well above the average. The few remaining Tory councils have generally fared better.

A survey of English authorities by the Local Government Chronicle shows that the 19

remaining Tory councils have been able to reduce council tax by 0.03 per cent. Labour, with 165 councils, is asking for an extra 6.36 per cent, while the 109 hung authorities need an extra 7.76 per cent on average. The Liberal Democrats need only 1.48 per cent extra.

Residents in metropolitan authorities will pay an extra 6.8 per cent and district householders will have to find an extra 5.9 per cent.

Frank Dobson, the Shadow



## Geographical lottery in nursery places

THE lottery of state-funded nursery education is disclosed in the tables. The proportion of places for three and four-year-olds ranges from 99 per cent in Sunderland to 21 per cent in Essex.

Some councils spending two and a half times as much as others. Cleveland has one of the best records, providing 93 per cent of the age group with a place for £113 each.

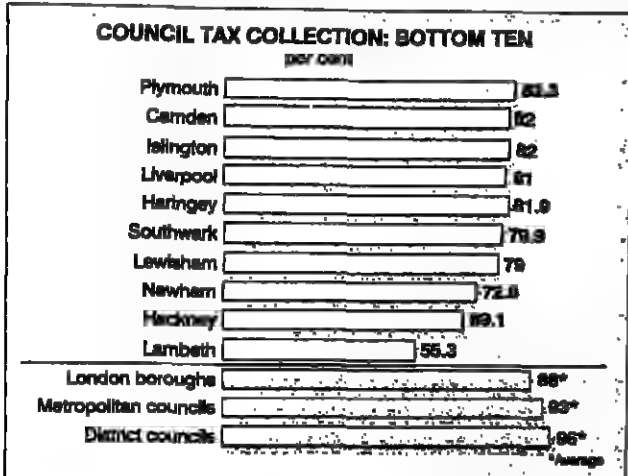
Wiltshire, which provides places for only 23 per cent, spends £15 on each child. On average, only half the under-fives in the shires have a council place provided.

In London the pacesetter is Tower Hamlets, providing places for 87 per cent, but each

costs £2,600. Bromley, which provides places for 33 per cent, spends £1,660 on each. The average London borough provides places for 57 per cent, but the proportion is higher in inner London.

Even Coventry, the lowest provider among the metropolitan councils, finds places for 60 per cent of under-fives. Trafford, which was under Conservative control over the year, had places for 88 per cent at a cost of £1,290 each. Liverpool, with over double the population in the age group, had places for 86 per cent, costing £1,320.

The biggest-spending metropolitan councils were Doncaster (£2,487), Manchester (£2,453), and Coventry (£2,343), and the lowest Wakefield (£1,952), Bradford (£1,959) and Bury (£2,031). Highest-spending counties were Mid Glamorgan (£2,557), Essex (£2,456) and Nottinghamshire (£2,418), and the lowest were Isle of Wight (£1,826), Northumberland (£1,841) and Dorset (£1,984).



## Collection rate is best in the shires

COUNCIL tax is proving much easier to collect than the poll tax, especially in the shires. Half of all district councils collect more than 97 per cent of the money due to them and the average for this type of authority is 96 per cent.

In London, however, the average is 88 per cent. It is dragged down by Lambeth, where a culture of non-payment grew during the days of the poll tax, when left-wing councillors urged residents not to pay. In the last set of indicators Lambeth collected 61 per cent, and that has now fallen to 55.3 per cent. Hackney has seen its collection rate drop even faster from 79 per cent to 69.1 per cent over the year.

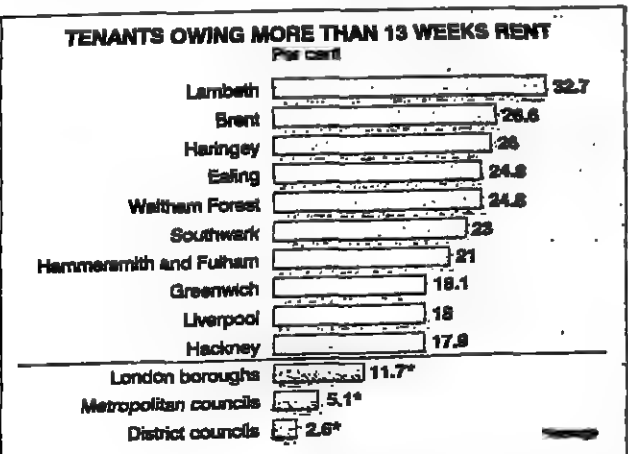
Compared with these figures, the metropolitan councils have a far better record, with an average take of 89 per cent, which the commission believes should be the target for all councils. The least successful is Liverpool, which

has the highest council tax level in England but collects only 81 per cent.

The cost of collection varies widely. In the City of London — a special case because of the small number of residents — it costs £129 per dwelling, compared with £44 in Labour-run Hackney, £21.98 in Tory Westminster and £11.39 in Liberal Democrat Sutton.

Outside London the collection costs are lowest in prosperous areas. In Surrey Heath, with a 96 per cent collection rate, the cost is £8.73 per dwelling. In St Albans, where the council collects 102.4 per cent, including unpaid tax from earlier years, the cost is £17.

The commission suggests it is not necessarily cash efficient to spend a lot to ensure 100 per cent collection; there may be a case for cutting the costs and accepting a lower success rate.



## Low spenders can be most efficient

A QUARTER of the population lives in council-owned property, but authorities vary widely in their ability to manage their stock.

The speed with which a council can relet a property is crucial in the battle against homelessness. The ability to ensure that rent is paid — either directly or through housing benefit — is vital in balancing the books.



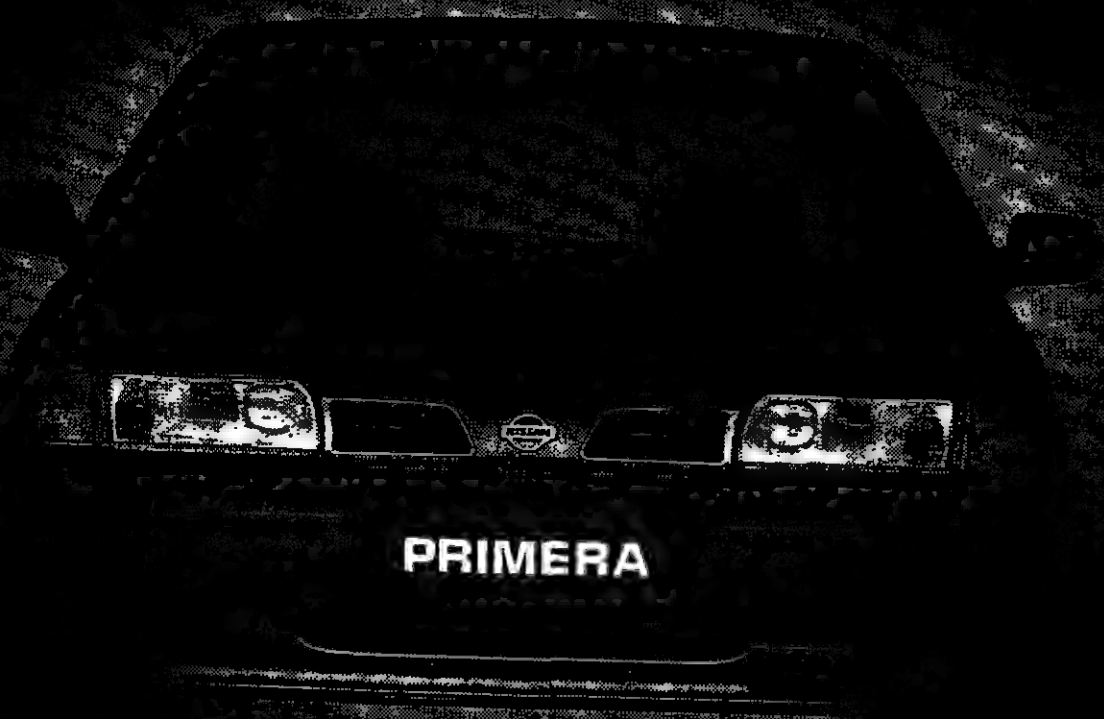
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# Courtier's letter reveals wear and tear of Tudor social whirl



Henry VIII: wine and dine with close circle

By DALYA ALBERG  
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

AN UNPUBLISHED letter in which one of Henry VIII's young courtiers begged his father for more money after some excessive partying with the king has surfaced in Cornwall. "The King has been to Richmond which has emptied my purse but much more made my body weary," wrote Thomas Arundell to Sir John Arundell from the royal court of Henry VIII.

It is one of ten letters by Thomas Arundell that have been discovered among thousands of historic documents spanning the 800-year history of the Arundells, a prominent West Country family.

In this correspondence, he complained too about one of the women in the royal circle: "Lady Oxford is as obstinate as a mule and follows her own wish, not listening to her kinsfolk or friends, nor any other honest man... If her niece were similar I would rather go to ruin than have her as wife."

Elsewhere, he described how his poor wardrobe was spoiling his hectic social life: "I am so bare of apparel that I do not come near my lord the king and find myself such and so my lord is ridden from London to Hampton Court and I do lie with my lady Stanop until I hear from you."

Of making a visit home he says: "Sir I pray you to remember me for very glad would I be to make one sortie to see you for one week if it

were your pleasure and I had the wherewithal."

Until 1991 the records of the Arundell family had been stored in 200 cardboard boxes and an old room at Wardour Castle in Wiltshire, the family's ancestral home. Cornwall Record Office persuaded the family to sell the documents: some had already decayed or been devoured by mice.

Staff at the record office in Truro have spent three years repairing the 28,000 documents before recording the details on computer. Materials used included sausage skins to bind fragile parchment. The material, dating from the 12th century onwards, includes letters, marriage certificates, dowries and Papal bulls.

Dr Oliver Padel, a Cambridge

medievalist who worked on the papers for 18 months, said the collection was of national importance because of the detail it contained: "These documents offer a real window into the past. It is rare for so much stuff to survive from the 12th and 13th centuries."

"In the past the documents could be examined by appointment at Wardour Castle by historians, but the lack of any index and the sheer mass of documents made proper research impossible."

The historian David Starkey, who is working on a biography of Henry VIII, said: "I would love to look at the letters. Although we have several glimpses of Henry's court, there are very large gaps — very few letters from members of the inner circle

describing their own experiences actually survive."

Thomas Arundell joined Henry VIII's inner circle of courtiers, marrying the sister of Catherine Howard, the king's fifth wife. Court banquets and drinking complemented a summer day's hunting or a winter session of jousting. Proceedings could become unruly, according to Dr Starkey. Once, Henry VIII and his guests becoming bored, took up bows and started shooting arrows inside one of his palaces.

At the height of their powers the Arundell family owned 28 manors in Cornwall as well as properties throughout southwest England. But after the Reformation the influence of the staunchly Catholic family declined.

## Public at risk from confusing sun-care guidance

By ADRIAN LEE

CONSUMERS are confused by labelling on sunscreens and largely ignorant about how to protect themselves despite the continuing rise in skin cancer cases, a study has shown.

Although the nation spends more than £100 million a year on sun-care products, the lack of information on packaging is disturbing, the Health Education Authority said yesterday. It urged manufacturers to provide better practical information to help to reduce deaths from skin cancer. There are now 40,000 cases a year — 90 per cent more than in the 1970s — and 2,000 deaths.

The study showed that more people were considering sunscreens as health products instead of tanning agents, but Dave Arnold, head of the authority's Sun Know How campaign, said: "It is disturbing that consumers are confused about on-pack information. Ignorance may be putting people at risk, he said."

Almost 70 per cent of people had heard of sun protection factors but only 20 per cent understood what the term meant. Women were more aware of the risks than men.

The majority of people now buy sunscreens but half said that information on labels was too technical. Few people understood the harmful effects of different ultraviolet rays.

Consumers should be warned, by the manufacturers, that sunscreens by themselves cannot entirely protect against skin damage, the authority said. Some people were using creams to enable them to sunbathe longer. Instead of burning after, for example, half an hour they were burning after two hours and still putting themselves at risk.

The findings, based on interviews with 2,000 people, have been presented to the industry. Tim Pemberton, projects officer on the authority's cancer team, said: "The 'buzz-word' now is lighter tan rather than dark. Any tan is a sign of skin damage but we have to be realistic. We are not going to get our message across by telling people not to tan at all."

## One 90-second film persuades Hollywood studios to compete for skills of British duo

### Novice animators hit the big time with Disney deal

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

TWO little-known British animators, whose only original work is a 90-second film about the thwarted ambitions of a small-town newspaper reporter, have signed a multi-million-pound feature film deal with Disney.

The Hollywood giant has asked Tim Watt, 30, and David Stoten, 33, to develop and produce two full-length animated films for international cinema release. Quentin Tarantino is being lined up to write the script for their first production, which will use 12in plasticine caricatures of living and dead Hollywood stars as its cast.

The duo, who clinched the deal at a secret meeting in Los Angeles last week, said yesterday that the past few weeks had been like "living in a fairyland".

Mr Stoten, who comes from Luton and trained at St Martin's School of Art in London, said that they were in discussions with Twentieth Century Fox to make a five-minute film when Disney became interested in their work.

"The next thing we knew we were at the centre of a bidding war between two big Holly-

wood studios. It felt unreal. Although we are trying to take it with a pinch of salt, you can't ignore all the excitement."

Mr Watt, who grew up in Castle Donington, Leicestershire, and trained as a draughtsman at Kingston University, said that the two owed much of their success to a chance meeting with Tarantino at the Nottingham Film Festival in 1994, where their first and only film, *The Big Story*, was screened.

After seeing the 90-second production, the Hollywood writer and director asked them if they would let him show it as the supporting film for his controversial box-office hit *Pulp Fiction*.

*The Big Story* thus received international media exposure. It was nominated for an Oscar last year and won a BAFTA award. The film, set in a pre-war newspaper office, features three plasticine models of the actor Kirk Douglas, all playing different roles. Shot in black and white, it aims to recapture the mood of cinema films of the 1940s.

"Tarantino has been very good to us and in many ways he would be the obvious choice

as a script collaborator. We will probably ask him to do work on the script," Mr Watt said.

Their first new film will aim to re-create the same nostalgic feel as *The Big Story* and will draw heavily on the history of Hollywood and its stars.

Both men, who plan to move to Hollywood, have worked for Spitting Image productions and commercials and believe that they have benefited from Britain's reputation as a world leader in film animation.

Mr Watt said: "The technical skills in America are great. What distinguishes British animation is that it challenges traditional formats and ways of doing things. It is more irreverent."

Last year Alison Snowden and David Fine, a British-based couple, took the Oscar for best animation with their film *Bob's Birthday*. Other recent British animation Oscars went to Nick Park, who won with *Creature Comforts* in 1991 and *The Wrong Trousers* in 1994, and Daniel Greaves, who took the award in 1992 with his six-minute film *Manipulation*.



David Stoten, left, and Tim Watt, whose first production impressed Quentin Tarantino at a film festival

## Excluded surgeon's court plea

By RICHARD DUCE

A LEADING heart surgeon began a High Court action yesterday to force a hospital to allow him to continue working after he made bribery allegations against a colleague.

Duncan Walker, a former Yorkshireman of the Year, rejected an offer of early retirement from the Killingbeck Hospital, Leeds, after other doctors refused to work with him.

He has not been allowed to operate since June last year while the United Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust carried out an investigation into alleged concerns about his work. The trust now agrees there are no grounds for any disciplinary action against Mr Walker, 53.

The bribery allegation was dismissed after an investigation by the hospital. Jeremy McMullan, QC, told Mr Justice Harman yesterday that Mr Walker was a cardiothoracic surgeon of "the highest level". He was urgently seeking a hearing of Mr Walker's right to work action, which the judge then set for April 1.

## Incurable virus found in red squirrel colonies

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

AN INCURABLE disease is killing red squirrels in their last remaining strongholds. Scientists said yesterday that they had discovered a virus in the bodies of dead red squirrels collected from forests in northwest England.

Dr Peter Cotgreave, of the Institute of Zoology in London, where the autopsies are being carried out, said the virus was of a type called parapox. "It is like a chicken pox virus or a smallpox virus. Potentially a vaccine could be found but at the moment it is untreatable," he said.

"At the moment we do not know much about how the disease spreads. But it could be a very serious threat to red squirrel populations."

The institute found the virus in dead squirrels collected last year from the Southport and Sefton areas of Merseyside. Since then it has been isolated from other carcasses in northwest England. Dr Cotgreave said that of the most recent batch of ten dead squirrels, three had the virus. The illness causes skin lesions.

Conservationists and sci-

entists suspect that red squirrels may have been carrying the virus for some time. They believe it has become active because the red population is now so small, fragmented and stressed. Research has indicated that grey squirrels are beating red squirrels in the battle for food, leaving the reds with poor diets.

There are only about 160,000 red squirrels left in Britain, the majority in Scotland. The virus discovery, which could herald their final decline in the face of their more successful grey cousins, has been made possible by a



The red squirrel survives only in small groups

scheme called North West Red Alert. The project has brought together groups including Lancashire and Cumbria wildlife trusts, the National Trust and Lake District National Park.

David Harpley, conservation manager of Cumbria Wildlife Trust, said yesterday: "We are trying to work out if this is an epidemic." He said up to 11 red squirrels had been found dead in one Lancashire wood. "That represents a fair number of squirrels in some populations."

Lynne Collins, also of the trust, said the autopsies could lead to other projects to help to protect Britain's reds. "In particular, we want to know how many have been killed by cars on the roads, and how many have been killed by disease or other factors," she said.

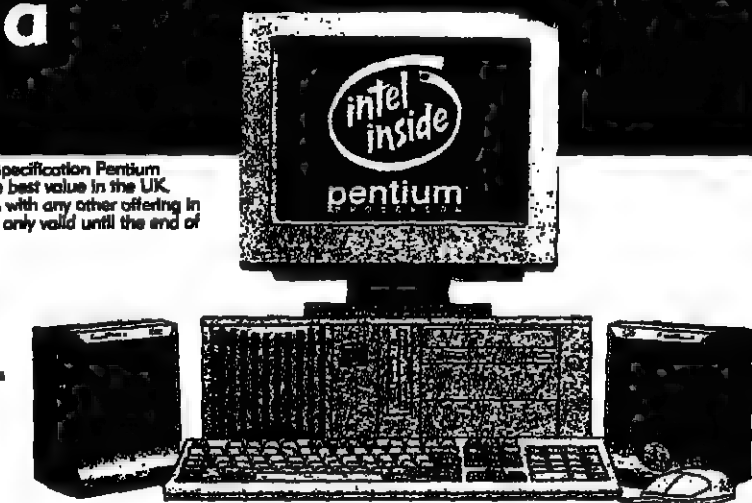
Ms Collins added that if wildlife groups found that stretches of road were "hot spots" where many animals died, they could perhaps relocate their feeding area to prevent them having to cross the road. Also, warning signs for motorists could be put up.

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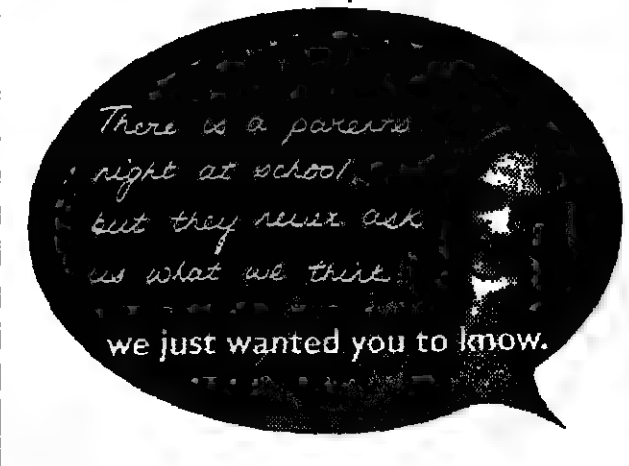
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America warns China to drop threats and sends 'best damned navy in the world' to Taipei's defence

## US agrees high-tech arms sale for Taiwan

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

AMERICA, in a further reminder to the Chinese of its military influence, agreed yesterday to sell mobile Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other defensive weapons to Taiwan, but denied a request to supply the island with diesel submarines.

Days before the territory enters its first democratic presidential elections and as tension mounts over Chinese war games in the Taiwan Strait, the Clinton Administration said it had agreed to supply a new weapons package during talks in Washington with Taiwanese officials.

The deal, which includes a batch of Stingers and the sale of an advanced targeting and navigation system for fighter jets, is expected to gain swift approval from Republicans in Congress who are critical of continued sabre rattling by Peking.

Still committed to its "One China" policy and to avoid further inflaming the Government in Peking, the White House rejected a long-standing request from Taipei for submarines to counter the improved naval capability of the mainland forces.

Taiwan is already engaged in the purchase of 150 F16 fighter jets and the United States has also promised to increase military training at American facilities for Taiwanese officers. The Taiwanese Government will send a team of experts to the United States to analyse the Chinese threat and to discuss the possibility of an anti-missile defence system.

Officials in Washington said this week's agreement was merely part of a long-standing American commitment to bolster defences in Taiwan and should not be considered out of the ordinary. Military sales to the island have averaged about \$600 million (£392 million) in recent years, a slight reduction from the 1980s but still covering a

broad range of military hardware, including fighter jets, helicopters, frigates, tanks and missiles.

"I would regard this as a fairly modest list of weapons," said a senior official. "The current situation over there has not changed anything."

The sale is, however, clearly another deliberate warning to China to drop its muscle-flexing aimed at influencing the Taiwanese election. It came as Washington and Peking increased their rhetoric with China attacking America for its "brazen show of force" and William Perry, the US Defence Secretary, declaring the American force sailing for the strait as "the best damned navy in the world."

Mr Perry said: "While they are a great military power, the premier, the strongest military power in the Western Pacific is the United States."

Separately, the House of Representatives in Washington approved a resolution to help to defend Taiwan against Chinese aggression. The 369-14 vote ended a debate which was fiercely critical of the Clinton Administration's policy towards China.

"The Administration should consider this a wake-up call," said Lee Hamilton, an Independent congressman from Indiana. "The consensus on China policy is eroding. Congress and the Administration are drifting apart. The Administration has been too timid."

□ Pakistan's arsenal: The Clinton Administration has notified Congress that it plans to go ahead with delivery of weapons to Pakistan that the Islamabad Government had paid for but never received, congressional sources said yesterday. The delivery had been held up for years because of Pakistan's nuclear programme. The weapons include navy Orion aircraft, Harpoon and AIM-9L missiles and other equipment worth £240 million. (Reuters)



The USS George Washington which has been sent from the Adriatic off Bosnia-Herzegovina to the Gulf to fill the vacuum left by moving the USS Nimitz to Taiwan

## Chinese keep up war of nerves

FROM JAMES FRINGILE IN PEKING

CHINA ended one set of live-fire military exercises in the Strait of Taiwan yesterday, as another continued — as did the rhetoric between the American and Chinese governments.

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a non-binding resolution saying that America must defend the island if it is attacked. One congressman said the vote was an "unambiguous signal to Peking".

Americans warships headed by the aircraft carrier USS Independence continued to patrol just east of Taiwan, while the carrier USS Nimitz, approaching from the Gulf, is expected at the weekend. Officials in Washington rejected warnings from Peking that American vessels must not sail through the Strait.

The latest Chinese exercise is due to end Monday, two days after the presidential elections in Taiwan.

## Pentagon rises to cutback challenge

BY TOM RHODES

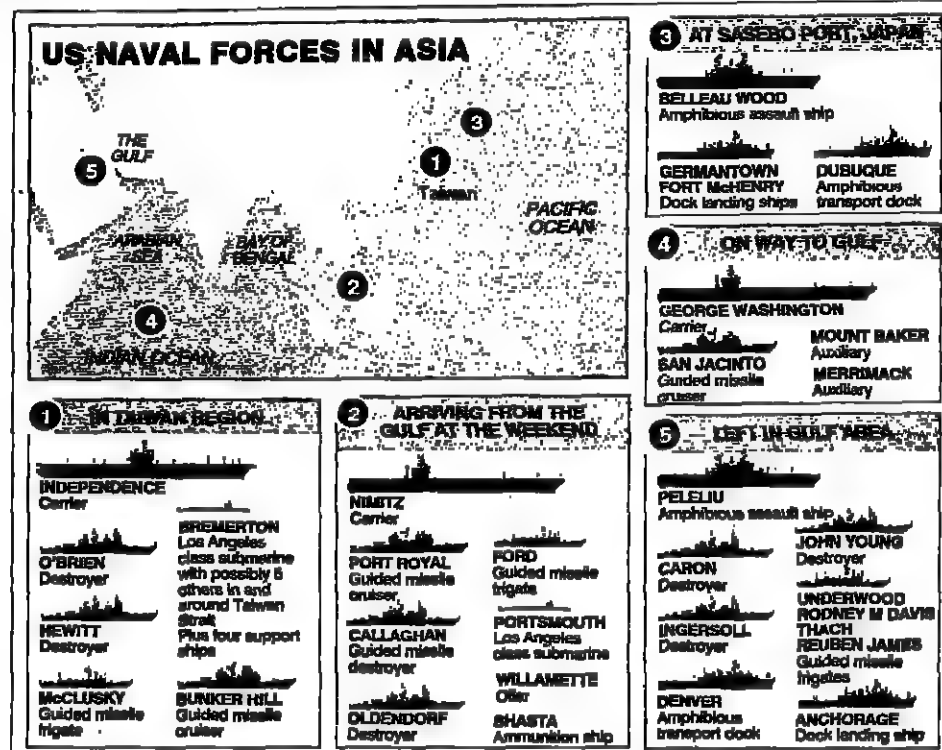
A BRIEF walk down corridor six in the Pentagon's "D" Ring at the Navy Command Centre gives proof of American might at sea.

The electronic maps, their small markers indicating vessels currently under way, are the most graphic illustration of comments this week by William Perry, the Defence Secretary, that "America has the best damn navy in the world, and no one should ever forget that".

There are 189 American ships at sea from a total fleet of 363. Of these, 102 are deployed outside American waters, including manoeuvres near the Straits of Taiwan, in the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Gulf.

Two battle groups, led by the aircraft carriers USS Independence and USS Nimitz, have been dispatched to international waters off Taiwan. The Nimitz will arrive from the Gulf by the end of this week to become part of what may be the largest and certainly the most formidable American armada in East Asia since the end of the Vietnam War.

The carriers hold at least 55 attack aircraft. Alongside them will be three attack submarines each carrying 24 weapons, including Tomahawk and Harpoon missiles as well as the Mark-48 torpedo. There are also accompanying destroyers and the Bunker Hill, a guided missile cruiser



operating to the south of Taiwan. The US fleet is the biggest and most effective navy in the world, designed to manage what the Pentagon describes as "two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts" at any one time.

More than 420,000 members of the US Navy are on active duty with a reserve force of nearly 100,000. In peace

time, American ships are deployed for forward presence to act as a deterrent and to influence global policy, both of which apply in the case of Taiwan, and in some cases to crises.

However, as almost anyone inside the Pentagon will admit, operational commitment often is not matched by naval power and, in recent

years, the Defence Department has been forced to cope with a reduction in numbers.

For example, the navy has not been buying carrier-based jets as fast as they are wearing out and does not have enough aircraft to fill the deck spots on its operational carriers. The current operation in Taiwan has meant that the USS George Washington, which

had been stationed in the Adriatic off Bosnia-Herzegovina, has been moved to the Gulf to fill the vacuum left by the departing Nimitz.

The balance between funding for force levels and readiness and modernisation stems from the Bottom-Up Review, a blueprint for the American military after the Cold War introduced by the Clinton Administration in September 1993. Compared to the Bush Administration's Base Force plan, the review soon became known as Base Force Lite.

Where the previous President had called for a reduced force structure of 12 active aircraft carrier battle groups, President Clinton demanded 11 and recommended a fleet of 346 ships, compared with 500 at the peak of the Reagan Administration.

Although the navy initially offered to reduce numbers even more drastically, defence officials in Washington soon recognised this could not anticipate for any contingency and have since argued that the fleet must remain at 346 by the end of the century.

A Pentagon official said yesterday: "The size of the fleet has been reduced after the end of the Cold War but as a result a lot of older ships have been removed. We now have a more modern fleet and our capability is very strong. We can still meet our commitments in the world."

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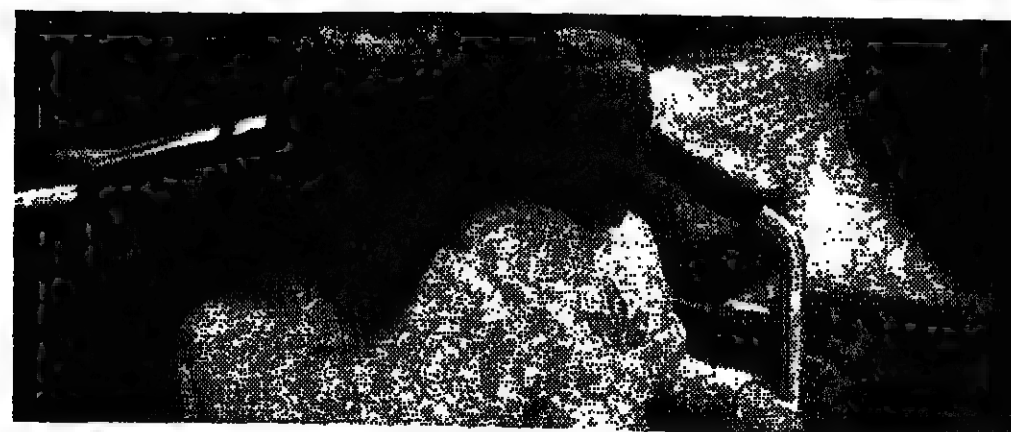
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CHANGING TIMES



Free Democrats risk collapse in regional polls

# Kohl's partners fight for survival in coalition

THE chattering of helicopters and the wail of sirens signal the arrival of a rescue team. Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign Minister, Wolfgang Gerhardt, the Free Democrat Party chief, and other luminaries dropped in on Hechingen yesterday to defend the euro, to boost about government successes, and to make a final attempt to save their shrinking party.

Hechingen is in the lush countryside of Baden-Württemberg, on the road to Switzerland. Like two other regions, Baden-Württemberg will have elections on Sunday, but much more is at stake than the fate of a few provincial barons.

If the Free Democrats collapse in all three states, the Bonn coalition of Christian Democrats and Free Democrats will be in serious trouble. In Baden-Württemberg, the prosperous southwestern province, the elections have become a first test of voter sentiment on European economic and monetary union (EMU).

Plastered throughout townships such as Hechingen, where small efficient factories in ugly plate-glass buildings have been grafted on to rural communities, there are posters declaring "Stability and jobs come first. So delay monetary union!"

The Social Democrats have covered the region with these posters, and politicians on the stump regularly inject a dose of Euro-scepticism into their speeches. They have to be careful, however. Social Democrat headquarters in Bonn is not entirely confident about waging an anti-euro campaign. The party is, if anything, more federalist than Helmut Kohl, the Chancellor.

The campaign managers in Baden-Württemberg have put together three elements and come up with a rough and ready election formula that they hope will win drifting votes: two-thirds of Germans say they are against abandoning the mark; Herr Kohl



Roger Boyes reports from Hechingen on the fading fortunes of the Chancellor's junior government partners

cannot state publicly that monetary union should be delayed; and unemployment has become the most potent of political issues.

The election posters were originally rather more snappy. The first draft said: "Stop the Christian Democrats! Stable currency instead of more unemployment; no euro for 1999." Oskar Lafontaine, the Social Democrat leader who is also pressing for delay rather than a weakening of the entry criteria for EMU, had the posters pulped. "It was too close to what the far-right Republicans are saying," Renate Schmalz, a party activist, said. "This is a problem in Germany — there is no popular support for an anti-European platform, and simply to defend the mark smacks of nationalism."

Dieter Spöri, the Deputy Prime Minister of the region, Economics Minister and the mastermind of the Social Democrat campaign against the euro, said: "It is too easy for the other side to accuse us

of being populist every time we raise an issue that is occupying ordinary people's minds."

Big companies in Germany generally approve of the euro, while small manufacturers are nervous; big banks are in favour, small ones are against. Baden-Württemberg is the home of Daimler-Benz and Porsche, but also of smaller export-oriented engineering and arms companies.

Herr Kohl's argument that delaying monetary union will cause a slide of funds into the mark and thus make problems for German exports does not really wash with these companies. They have built up global businesses despite a strong mark, on the basis of reliable servicing, pricing and delivery. To them, the euro threatens to be an inflationary, all-purpose currency.

Can the Social Democrats really scratch together more votes on the back of an EMU-sceptical campaign? Dr Spöri says that the party has risen by at least three percentage

points in the opinion polls over the past month. However, he has also been tapping other controversial issues such as immigration, so the exact impact of the campaign is difficult to calculate.

The Christian Democrats and Social Democrats have a "grand coalition" in Baden-Württemberg. Broadly speaking, this alliance has worked for the past four years, although the state is no longer regarded as the main economic powerhouse of Germany; that title has been yielded to Bavaria. Since 1992, about 250,000 jobs have been lost in the state.

In Bonn too there is growing talk of a grand coalition. The logic runs as follows: if the Free Democrats lose their footing in the weekend elections, then they will also have lost their credibility as a coalition partner for Herr Kohl and the Chancellor will be in trouble.

Baden-Württemberg is thus being watched on two counts: is the grand coalition an enduring model? Is the euro a powerful election issue that can tip the scales against the Christian Democrats?

The other two elections on Sunday have less important implications. In Schleswig-Holstein, Heidi Simonis, the Social Democrat Prime Minister, is defending her absolute majority. Will she have to share power with the Greens? In Rhineland-Palatinate, a tired-looking coalition of Social Democrats and Free Democrats is wondering if the Free Democrats will survive.

In Hechingen, the slogan of the warm-up men in the town hall museum was: *Es geht um Alles!* (Everything is at stake). The Free Democrats use this threat at every regional election, but have continually fallen short of the 5 per cent needed for parliamentary representation. If they lose in the three states at the weekend, they will be present in only one regional parliament.

Bill Cash, page 20



Gerhardt: leader of party in desperate trouble



Kinkel: minister anxious to defend the euro



Kate Winslet: performances marked by youthful passion have taken her to the top

## A Titanic role for Britain's new star

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

KATE WINSLET, who has been nominated for an Oscar for her role opposite Emma Thompson in *Sense and Sensibility*, has vaulted firmly into the big time by landing the lead in *Titanic*, a \$100 million action adventure set on the doomed liner.

Miss Winslet, 20, who is English, sprang to prominence in Hollywood last year with her performance in the New Zealand film *Heavenly Creatures*. She will know on Monday if she has won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Marianne Dashwood, the sensibility of Jane Austen's novel.

Her latest role appears to require of her the youthful passion that has marked her best performances, but there the similarities end. As Rose Dewitt Baker, she plays an aristocratic young woman driven by ennui and curiosity to explore life outside the stifling first-class upper decks of the *Titanic*.

The film is to be directed by James Cameron, an action and special effects maestro better known for his work with the likes of Arnold Schwarzenegger in *True Lies* than with English roses.

Emma Thompson, a previous best actress Oscar winner, is also up for this year's best actress and best adapted screenplay awards. If she wins both it will be the first double Oscar of its kind.

## Pavarotti to leave wife after affair

BY RICHARD OWEN

LUCIANO PAVAROTTI yesterday admitted adultery with his 26-year-old secretary and announced that he was separating from his wife, Adina, after 35 years of marriage.

However, in a joint statement the Pavarotti said that divorce proceedings were not in prospect, and that the separation did not preclude a reconciliation.

The break-up of the Pavarotti's marriage became inevitable after the tenor was pictured on the front cover of the popular Italian magazine *Chi* last month in a passionate clench with his secretary, Nicoletta Mantovani while on holiday in Barbados.

After this his wife wrote an open letter using her maiden name, Adina Veroni, reminding Signor Pavarotti of the support family life gave him and warning him not to make a fool of himself "in the sunset of your career".

The affair persisted, however, and there have been repeated rumours that Signor Pavarotti's secretary is now pregnant.



Pavarotti: admitted his adultery with secretary

## France boosts conscript force to tackle violence in schools

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

FRANCE will deploy more than 2,000 extra conscripts in schools across the country as part of a package of measures to combat a rising tide of violence in French playgrounds and classrooms.

After a series of violent incidents at schools in the past three months, the number of conscripts serving as "school auxiliary staff" would be increased by 2,200. François Bayrou, the Education Minister, announced yesterday. The massacre at the school in Dunblane, Scotland, has also had an effect.

The French Government began posting plainclothes national servicemen to schools three years ago, but the latest move has almost doubled the number of conscripts patrolling French schools.

Most schools in France are already equipped with surveillance cameras and other security measures but a spate of recent attacks has heightened fears that schools in some of the poorest neighbourhoods are becoming virtual "combat zones".

In Paris recently, a teacher was assaulted and badly injured by the parent of a pupil; during last summer's wave of terrorist attacks, a bomb was planted outside a Jewish school in Lyons; and last week, three pupils at a school in northern France built a bomb and then detonated it in a washroom.

The Government has also pledged to alter the penal code to make it an offence to enter school property without authorisation, and a new telephone hotline to the Education Ministry has been set up for battered teachers.

"The principle is that there should never be impunity for delinquents, wherever they come from," President Chirac declared yesterday.

M. Bayrou also outlined plans to train teachers in how to deal with violent pupils and said special classes would be established in an attempt to create educational and work opportunities for young people who had dropped out of school. At a Cabinet meeting yesterday, M. Chirac cautiously welcomed the Bayrou plan, but noted that he hoped it would not be "the umpteenth plan to have no effect".

Government officials said posting unarmed national servicemen in schools has proved an effective deterrent to violence and vandalism. The conscripts, serving their ten months of national service, act as auxiliary staff, performing a range of duties from monitoring playgrounds to running clubs after school hours and acting as security guards.

## Grannies turn discount offer into profit

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

AN ITALIAN supermarket that offered 20 per cent discounts to the over-60s has discovered the flaw in the scheme: resourceful and unscrupulous grandmothers have been hiring themselves out to shoppers who are under 60 but still like the idea of a discount on their grocery bill.

The management of the supermarket in Udine, near

Venice, was surprised and delighted by the "unimaginable success" of its scheme. The "senior citizens discount" produced a 40 per cent surge in takings, making Udine, a medieval town hitherto best known for its Tiepolo frescoes, a Mecca for elderly shoppers.

It took a year for the ploy to drop. "We seem to have been providing a social service," the manager said ruefully yesterday. "The ordinary shoppers made a saving, and

the old people made a fortune in time." He knew there had been cases of middle-aged people pretending to be older, but he had no idea that teams of grandmothers had been operating a systematic scam, loading up trolleys of groceries and unloading them into the cars of strangers. The more enterprising had hovered near the entrance, whispering "Need any help with your shopping?" as customers arrived.

The reaction of many Italians was to applaud a display of enterprise. "This was no racket," said *la Repubblica*. "It was yet another example of our native Mediterranean genius, a brilliant scheme for saving money all round."

One defiant grandmother said at the checkout: "It helped to supplement my pension. I've never seen so much of my children and grandchildren before in my life." The scheme has now been dropped.

## Chernobyl 'threatens 30m'

BY NICK NUTTALL ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A DEADLY legacy from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster has been identified by scientists who fear that more than 30 million people in Ukraine may be at risk from radioactive contamination.

The risk is coming from water being washed by floods from near the crippled reactor into rivers used for drinking, irrigation and fishing. The findings, by a team of 59 scientists from eight countries, have come from a European Commission-funded study nearly a decade after the world's worst nuclear accident.

The scientists have said that fishing should be banned at Lake Kozhanov in Russia, 156 miles from the power plant. Tests indicate that the fish in the lake are contaminated with radioactivity that exceeds European safety limits by up to 60 times. The dangers are to be explained at a European Commission conference this week in Minsk. On April 26, 1986, the

fourth reactor at Chernobyl exploded, spewing vast amounts of radioactive particles into the air which then rained down on large swaths of Europe.

The scientists now calculate that the accident deposited 380 terabecquerels of strontium and plutonium on the floodplain. Over the past decade this has flooded six times with another inundation expected this spring. Umberto Sansone, of the Italian Government's Environmental Protection Agency, said yesterday that each time radioactivity was being washed and deposited into the Pripyat river, which feeds the Dnepr. The two rivers supply drinking water to about nine million people and irrigation and fish for a further 23 million.

Dr Sansone said the threat was being aggravated by underground dumps where contaminated parts of the crippled reactor and radioactive pine trees have been buried. The dumps could also leak into the river systems contaminating them in 10 to 15 years time, the scientists said.



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# Perot hint of challenge for White House sours Dole victory celebrations

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER  
IN WASHINGTON

BOB DOLE emerged yesterday with a mathematical lock on the Republican presidential nomination for which he had yearned so long, but he was clearly rattled by Ross Perot's strongest hint yet that he will mount another bid for the presidency.

The Senate leader's clean sweep of all Tuesday's four Midwest primaries carried him comfortably past the 996 delegates he required

to clinch a nomination he first sought 16 years ago. But even amid the celebrations he disclosed that his wife, Elizabeth, had telephoned to warn him of Mr Perot's latest statement. "It does concern me ... it helps Bill Clinton."

The Texas billionaire, who said he would run if asked by his fledgling Reform Party because "I just can't sit here and see things deteriorating", won 19 million predominantly Republican votes in 1992 with his campaign to clean up Washington, balance the bud-

get and kill free trade agreements, and was widely blamed by Republicans for President Bush's defeat. A Gallup poll this week gave Mr Perot 16 per cent support, enough to wreck Mr Dole's presidential hopes if he once again split the anti-Clinton vote, and the Senate leader appealed to him during a television interview to stay out. "Ross, we are the reform party. Take a look at your checklist, take a look at what we are trying to do in the Republican Party. I think every issue you've raised we have

had or will have a vote on it ... Ross, what else do you want?"

Mr Dole's pleasure at securing the nomination barely a month after his humiliating loss in New Hampshire was also tempered by a close reading of Tuesday's results in the industrial Midwest which will be November's most crucial battleground. He romped home in Ohio and Illinois, but in Wisconsin and Michigan, Pat Buchanan won 34 per cent of the vote. That was his highest in any primary so far and much more

than he won in either state in his 1992 campaign. Exit polls showed nearly half the voters believed Mr Dole lacked any new ideas, would lose in November, and were unhappy with the choice of candidates. The 72-year-old senator also performed poorly among independents and those who voted for Mr Perot in 1992.

Buchanan aides used the figures to float the bizarre idea that Mr Dole should ask the populist conservative to be his running-mate because he alone could

galvanise the blue-collar "Reagan Democrats". Greg Mueller, Mr Buchanan's spokesman, said: "They ought to consider it if they want to win." He also gave a warning that Mr Buchanan might run as an independent if Mr Dole ignored his platform. "There is immense pressure on Pat, not only among some senior aides here at the campaign, but also among our grassroots activists and the grassroots leadership. They're saying, 'Don't endorse Dole, and run third party.'"

Mr Dole showed no inclination to bargain with Mr Buchanan and focused exclusively on Mr Clinton. He told cheering supporters at a packed victory party in a Washington hotel that November's election would be a clear choice between "a candidate who will fight for change and a candidate who will campaign for change then fight for the status quo". He added: "The fall campaign is under way. It's 230 days to defeating Clinton."

Photograph, page 24

## Drug-resistant TB 'is likely to kill tens of millions'

By EVE-ANN PRENTICE

A DRUG-RESISTANT form of tuberculosis, in which body tissue takes on the appearance of cheese, is poised to kill tens of millions of people across the world, according to the World Health Organisation.

The new plague, which will be far more widespread and devastating than AIDS, is "only a whisker away", the WHO will announce in London today, because warnings about the global threat from the disease made three years ago have been largely ignored.

The strain of the disease, which is airborne and therefore far more contagious than AIDS, has infected people in London and New York, as well as in the developing world. Dr Joel Almeida, medical officer for the WHO's Global Tuberculosis Programme, said yesterday: "No one is safe; even the Queen is not immune. You cannot protect yourself by wearing a condom."

Tuberculosis is expected to kill 30 million people this decade, according to the organisation. After decades in remission, the disease is epidemic in parts of Russia and is spreading worldwide, the WHO said.

Merlin, the British medical relief agency that is helping to fight an epidemic in Chechnya and Siberia, has issued a warning that the drug-resistant strains of TB are emerging because many infected people are not completing courses of antibiotics. If pa-

tients abandon their treatment half way through the six-month course, the bacilli survive and develop immunity. "If the multi-drug-resistant strain becomes predominant, we will be back in pre-antibiotic days," Dr Almeida said. "All we will be able to do is pray and send people off to sanatoriums like we did in the last century. There will be nowhere to hide except perhaps go to the moon. Eight out

**6 In a big outbreak, all we will be able to do is pray and send people to sanatoriums**

of ten people catching the disease contract the pulmonary form, but this can affect anywhere: spine or the brain, which sends you mad. A patient's body tissue suffers caseating necrosis, which is from the Latin for turning to cheese, so healthy tissue becomes cheesy and patients begin to cough it up. Some drown in their own blood."

Today in a press conference drawing attention to the threat in the run-up to World TB Day on Sunday, Merlin joins the WHO in pressing governments and non-governmental

organisations to spend more money on a campaign to curb the drug-resistant strain through a treatment known as DOTS. Directly Observed Treatment. Short course, in which health workers ensure that patients complete their antibiotic courses. World TB Day will also be marked by a religious service conducted by a former TB sufferer, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in Cape Town. President Mandela of South Africa also contracted the disease while he was a prisoner.

A third of the world's population is infected by TB which causes more than a quarter of avoidable adult deaths in the developing world, the WHO says. It predicts that 300 million people will become infected in the next ten years and, without treatment, each victim will infect ten to 15 others every year.

The WHO wants the world's governments to invest \$500 million (£326 million) a year to fight the threat. The organisation estimates that that would save the lives of three million breadwinners, or £15.6 billion a year.

"People looking to invest in the emerging new global markets are only a plane ride away from disaster," Dr Almeida said. "The scale of the problem is far more vast than people seem to realise. One big outbreak, and you will have governments scrambling to do something about it, but it will be too late."



Residents of a Dhaka slum area watch from the safety of river shallows as their homes burn yesterday. The disaster, which may have been started by an overturned stove, left thousands of people homeless in the Bangladeshi capital. To add to

## Thousands homeless after fire

their troubles, soldiers built bunkers and mounted heavy guns in strategic positions in the city as the country slipped further into political chaos

(Ahmed Fazl writes). In the nation's second city, Chittagong, armoured lorries left the garrison to secure a main road linking the two cities. Op-

position activists have held the port virtually under siege for the past two weeks. Strikes are part of an opposition campaign, led by the Awami League, to bring down the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party Government of Begum Khalida Zia.

## Murder victim tapes final minutes

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A WOMAN who was abducted at gunpoint in the United States managed to switch on a tape recorder in her handbag and record the last minutes of her life.

Her actions provided police with a record of the gunman's voice and personal details and her desperate attempts to talk

him out of his folly. She failed, however, and was suffocated. The 24-minute tape, part of which has been released by New Jersey police, shows that in her final moments Kathleen Weinstein thought she had succeeded in persuading the gunman to leave her unharm. Showing remarkable calm, she told the youth he was making a mistake and promised not to tell anyone about him if he let her go. She also gleaned his first name, age, and details of his past.

In excerpts released by the police, a steady-voiced Mrs Weinstein, 45, told her assailant: "Don't you understand, though, what kind of trouble you are going to get in? Don't you think they're going to find you? You haven't done anything yet. All you have to do is let me go and take my car."

Mrs Weinstein, a teacher, was abducted in the car park of a shopping mall where she had stopped to buy a sandwich.

Police have arrested a 17-year-old, named by a newspaper as Michael LaSane. Last Thursday's attack took place on the day before his 17th birthday, when he allegedly went to look for a car for his birthday present. Investigators believe he took a fancy to Mrs Weinstein's red 1995 Toyota Camry.

At one point on the tape, Mrs Weinstein appeared to crack under the strain. She regained her composure to press on, her abductor the consequences of his actions. "Do you really want that on your head? Hijacking a car and leaving somebody?" She also told him about her hus-

band and six-year-old son, and of her desire to foster a child.

The gunman's answers will not be made public until the case reaches court, but Mrs Weinstein's part of the dialogue continued: "Why don't you just start all over again and not take the car and let me drive you somewhere? You'll be safe and you won't have to get in trouble. Whatever trouble you're in, you didn't add to it yet, right?"

The last words were proved sadly wrong. Mrs Weinstein's body was found, hands and feet bound, in a corpse near her home in Tinton Falls, New Jersey.

She had been suffocated with her coat. In its pocket was the tape, which she had managed to transfer from her handbag.

## Video ruling for Clinton

Washington: A judge yesterday spared President Clinton the embarrassment of a personal appearance at the trial of his former Arkansas business partners, ruling that he could give evidence on videotape (Martin Fletcher writes).

However, Judge George Howard refused the President's request for advance notice of the questions.

Mr Clinton's testimony was demanded by Jim and Susan McDougal, the Clintons' former partners in the White-water Development Corporation, who have been charged with fraud and conspiracy. They want the President to rebut a claim by David Hale that as Arkansas Governor Mr Clinton put pressure on him to make an improper \$300,000 (£196,000) loan to Mrs McDougal from a small business programme.

## THE SUNDAY TIMES

### A STAR IS BORN



At long last the Hubble Space Telescope is living up to expectations, sending back information that is rewriting the history of the universe and spectacular pictures such as this of the formation of stars in the Eagle nebula seven millennia ago

In the Magazine on Sunday, Peter Millar charts the astonishing work done by astronauts and astronomers which put the Hubble project back on course

### A GARDENING VIDEO FOR JUST £1.98

Learn from the experts how to create a garden from scratch, or adapt an existing one. It's a 60-minute video from the Royal Horticultural Society, Making a Small Garden. It usually costs £14.99 but is available to readers of The Sunday Times for just £1.98. See the Style section

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## Russians blunder in space

BY NIGEL HAWKES  
SCIENCE EDITOR

AMERICAN scientists have worked out why a satellite they launched with Russia failed after only one day in orbit: the Russians had wired up the solar panels the wrong way round.

Instead of charging the batteries on the £4.5 million satellite, the panels discharged them. "It's always the simple stuff that kills you," said Dr James Cantrell, in charge of the mission at Utah State University.

The satellite, called Skipper, was designed to stay in orbit for 30 days to test its ability to detect and identify incoming missiles, as part of a space defence system. The Pentagon paid for it.

Dr Cantrell declined to blame the Russians. "It's not that they're stupid," he said, admitting that his own scientists failed to detect it.

The debacle is not the only problem clouding US-Russian relations in space. After two link-ups between American shuttle and the Russian space station Mir, and with a third planned this week, they are arguing over who will command the space station once it is built.

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# Mandela financial offer spurned as Winnie fights on

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

WINNIE MANDELA said yesterday that she would challenge a court order granting President Mandela a divorce, just hours after he offered her an out-of-court financial settlement.

The South African leader's initiative followed a rejection by the Supreme Court of Mrs Mandela's claim to half his estate, estimated by one newspaper at about £6.6 million. She failed to appear in court or to send a lawyer.

On Tuesday a judge upheld Mr Mandela's claim that the marriage had irretrievably broken down, and ordered Mrs Mandela to pay legal costs. Her request for an adjournment after dismissing her lawyers was rejected by the court as a ploy.

In a statement issued through his lawyers yesterday, Mr Mandela said: "I'm glad that the case is over and regret that my ex-wife could not bring herself to negotiate an amicable settlement. It would have saved us both and our children much pain."

However, Mrs Mandela later indicated that there may be more pain to come. In her first public comment since the divorce was granted, she said she was seeking legal advice on whether she could take the matter to the highest court in South Africa, the Constitutional Court.

"Once it became apparent that the court expected me to conduct my own defence, despite my humble request for an opportunity to enable preparation, it seemed the only appropriate remedy for me to enforce my constitutional rights to a fair trial will lie with the Constitutional Court," she said. "It is disheartening for me, as it must be for millions of women and men who expect a democracy entails that fairness and justice would rank far higher than an obdurate adherence to rules of procedure."

There is speculation over why Mrs Mandela is continuing to resist the divorce. Some say it is for revenge, others believe she fears loss of power and influence. A close family friend said: "Her resistance to the divorce is a way of vindicating herself and restoring her dignity. It is that she is fighting for."

If that is the case, however, it seems to have backfired. Evidence in court has highlighted her infidelities and spendthrift ways. The President yesterday submitted new papers in court, describing her as a big spender living beyond her means.

The papers showed that Mr Mandela gave her more than three million rands (more than £550,000) between Febru-

ary 1990 and June 1995. The highest amount listed was 600,000 rands for Mrs Mandela's mansion in an area of Soweto dubbed Beverly Hills, which she came close to losing after defaulting on mortgage repayments.

Another \$52,000 rands was for the legal costs of her kidnapping trial after the killing of Stompie Seipei, a teenage activist.

Mr Mandela's original affidavit disclosed that while his ex-wife earns 16,000 rands a month as an ANC MP, she spends 107,000.

The papers also show that Mr Mandela lavished gifts on their two daughters, spending 996,000 rands buying them houses, cars and paying for their children's schooling. It has been suggested that, despite claims about his wealth, Mr Mandela does not have a large amount of disposable income. A third of his income goes to a children's fund and his two homes are thought to be owned by the ANC. Yet the documents show that he has spent about four million rands on three family members over the past five years.

Despite her position, Mrs Mandela is clearly determined to fight on. A friend said: "She is strong and determined to fight back. You can't put a lion down."



## Relaxed Clarke practises safe politics

BY INIGO GILMORE

WHILE Kenneth Clarke's "friends" hint that he might resign over a commitment to hold a referendum on the European single currency, thousands of miles away in South Africa yesterday he showed his determination to enjoy the perks of office.

Except for his pinstripe suit, the chortling Chancellor might have been mistaken for any middle-aged British tourist on a visit to Soweto. Soaking up the sunshine, the paunchy minister went on a

jolly walkabout yesterday morning, sampling cold drinks, nibbling snacks and joking with residents.

The Chancellor, who has a knack of including bird watching on foreign visits, is on a fact-finding mission for British business. He has been accompanied by ten executives from leading companies to discuss business opportunities and privatisation.

Mr Clarke was in Soweto to see some of the projects supported by British aid. These

include The Lambeth Walk, a row of small business premises constructed with British help, and the Social Marketing of Condoms Projects, a programme to reduce the spread of Aids.

After an uncertain welcome from a giant yellow condom called "Mr Lover Man", his first port of call was Classic Marking, a hair products shop. Then he was off again, bouncing along the sidewalk before ducking into the fish

Clarke's eyes widened and girth swelled. "Real chips," he exclaimed to bystanders.

But the Chancellor was not shirking his duties. He had intelligent questions and kind words for everybody, from an inebriated tramp to the large black female builder laying bricks.

Happily the Chancellor has a few more days before returning to the Treasury. Last night he left for Zimbabwe where he will meet government officials — and a few feathered friends.

## Consul is held in babies for sale probe

BY CHRISTOPHER WALKER

JORDAN announced yesterday that it had arrested Sri Lanka's honorary consul as part of an investigation into the sale of illegitimate babies of Sri Lankan maids to childless couples around the world.

Judicial sources in Amman said the babies were sold for between £5,000 to £6,500 each, but would not disclose the number of children involved. There are an estimated 16,000 Sri Lankans in the Hashemite kingdom, mainly working as maids for about £65 a month.

Government officials said Tawfiq Abu Khajil, a leading Jordanian businessman who serves as honorary consul, faced an investigation on several charges. He is currently in hospital after complaining of heart pains.

Diplomatic sources in Amman believe that the case could have links to other parts of the Middle East. In Colombo, the Sri Lankan Foreign Ministry told Reuters that it was aware of the case, but had no details.

Some Sri Lankan maids in Jordan, made pregnant by their employers or lovers, have been forced to return home with the child after standing trial for conceiving out of wedlock. Under Jordanian law, adoption is permitted, regardless of nationality, but under tight restrictions.

It was unclear last night whether any British families were involved.

## Raid on Ugandan village leaves 34 dead

FROM SAM KILEY IN NAIROBI

CHRISTIAN extremists, backed by Sudan's radical Islamic regime, killed 34 people and kidnapped 58 others in a raid on a north Ugandan village. The attack put the death toll in an upsurge of violence by the Lord's Resistance Army in the past fortnight at more than 200.

The raid on Pabo village, 230 miles north of Kampala, the Ugandan capital, occurred as Islamic militants in neighbouring Sudan took control of the People's Congress in general elections.

The success in the elections of Hassan al-Turabi, chairman of the Popular Islamic Conference, his deputy, Ibrahim al-Sanousi, and Ali Osman Mohammed Taha, the Foreign Minister, puts the

National Islamic Front at the centre of parliamentary power and erodes the executive authority of Omar al-Bashir, who won the presidential contest.

Their victory is likely to lead to greater backing for the Lord's Resistance Army despite the Khartoum Government's claim that it lends support to the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). Angered by the raids, President Museveni of Uganda vowed this week to wipe out the force within six months. He accused Khartoum of backing the group which wants to set up a regime in Uganda based on The Ten Commandments.

The Lord's Resistance Army, formed in 1987 by a self-proclaimed prophetess, Alice Lakwena, has a reputation for brutality. Those who reject it have their lips cut off with secateurs, its "soldiers"

have gone into battle holding sticks that Ms Lakwena claimed would turn into weapons. They also rubbed on their bodies oil that Ms Lakwena had blessed, claiming that it would turn bullets to water. However, her inability to turn oil into battle armour led to President Museveni driving the group out of Uganda in 1990, and its high-priestess into exile in Kenya.

Khartoum, stung by Uganda's covert backing for the SPLA, has rearmend the Lord's Resistance Army, which crossed back into Uganda this year with 500 soldiers. They have teamed up with a force already in the country, led by Joseph Kony, their new high-priest. The group has kept the Ugandan Army on the run, recently ambushing a 17-vehicle convoy and killing more than 150 people.

## Dunblane's sympathy

Manila: The people of Dunblane have sent their condolences to the Philippines after a disco fire in Manila killed 151 people, mainly students, the British Embassy said yesterday.

Philippine investigators are trying to establish the cause of the blaze at the Ozon disco in the Quezon City district on Tuesday.

Yesterday the Philippine Government barred the owners of the disco from leaving the country and said anyone found to be negligent over the fire would face charges. (Reuters)

## Israelis destroy 'terror homes'

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

THREE Palestinian family homes in the occupied West Bank were demolished by Israeli security forces yesterday.

The action, despite protests by Israeli human rights groups, was part of an operation to destroy the homes of seven Islamic suicide bombers and their accomplices.

As the sappers blew up the home of Ibrahim Sarajneh, who killed one person in a suicide attack in Ashkelon on February 25, thousands of residents of al-Fawwar refugee camp where he lived were

herded on to a nearby hill. The Palestinians shouted "God is greatest" and threw stones at Israeli troops, who responded with rubber bullets and live ammunition before a bulldozer flattened the remains of the two-storey house.

"This is a collective punishment which does not solve the problems of Jews and Arabs and does not serve the peace process," said Adnan Ghatasheh, 35, a resident of the squalid camp near Hebron.

Soon after he spoke, another house in the camp was blown up. It belonged to Majdi Abu Wardah, who killed 25 people in the first of two attacks on

Jerusalem's ill-fated Number 18 bus line. The families of both dead bombers are now living in tents provided by the International Red Cross.

Cabinet ministers say the demolitions are likely to be followed in the next few days by the deportation of senior suspected members of Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement.

□ Gaza: A court here has sentenced three Palestinian men to hang for murdering a moneychanger. They have ten days to appeal. It is the first time that judges in the self-ruled area have imposed the death penalty. (Reuters)

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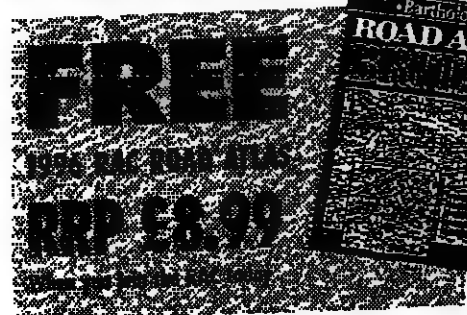
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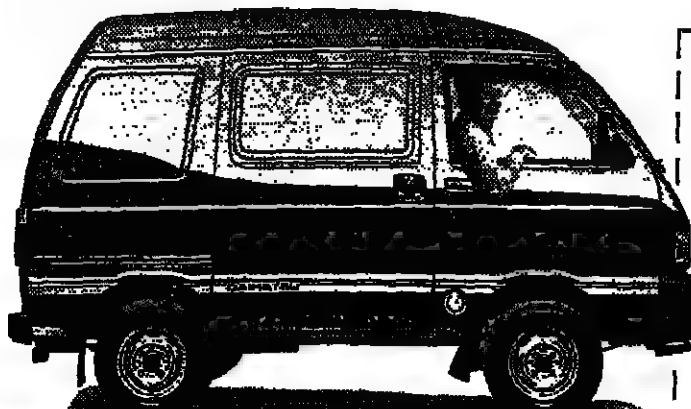
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Quentin Letts reports from New York on the launch of a fashion list that has dished the dirt on its rival

# Who decides who dresses the best?

New York's *grande dame* of fashion is being challenged for her perch. Eleanor Lambert, who since 1940 has run the List of the World's Best-Dressed Women and whose social pronouncements can mince the most ambitious Lady Wishfort into carfood, finds herself with serious competition for the first time in more than half a century.

An imperious young man called Michael Gross has started a rival list. To make matters worse, he is a one-time member of Miss Lambert's salon, and has dished the dirt on what goes on there — the social mugging, the graciously concealed backstabbing, the ballroom tweaking. The betrayal is too ghastly for words and, behind the rustle of taffeta, the whispers are deafening.

Miss Lambert, who runs a fashion publicity company, knows the inside of every decent duplex on Fifth Avenue. She is Manhattan's answer to the combined clout of London's Christina Foyle and Betty Kenward. Her annual list is a social and historical chronicle, tending to favour diplomats' daughters, dames with old money and, to add zest, the occasional elegant movie actress. Its publication is eagerly awaited and was traditionally seen as a barometer of social progress as much as style. Tiffany, the jeweller, counts Miss Lambert's patronage and the wives of European noblemen pay homage in the hope of favours.

Aged 80-plus, Miss Lambert glides through Upper East Side society with ease, raising a fragile hand. Queen Mum-style, to acknowledge the throng's salutes.

That frail mite, in recent days, is rumoured to have been bailed in irritation at the antics of the young Mr Gross. He, in conjunction with *Manhattan File* magazine, has announced the creation of a new annual register, the List of Best-Dressed New Yorkers Aged 40 and Under. The implication is clear: Miss Lambert's list has in recent

years started to resemble a group outing from the Diana Vreeland Retirement Home.

Not content with starting a rival list, the impish Mr Gross, who has a solid if sharp reputation in New York fashion, rattled on his experiences as a committee member on Miss Lambert's list. He described how he and certain other fashion pundits were summoned one February day to her lair on Manhattan's Upper East Side to sift through the people nominated by more than 1,000 selected voters around the world. In fact, wrote Mr Gross, he and most of his colleagues "sat in

of mourning, together with her sister, Princess Lee Radziwill, and her mother-in-law, Mrs Joseph P. Kennedy. Queen Sirikit of Thailand made the cut — "the most beautifully dressed person at the Greek royal wedding," notes the release — as did, among others, Mrs Wyatt Cooper (Gloria Vanderbilt), Mrs Alfred Bloomingdale and the Misses Anne and Charlotte Ford. That year also saw the admittance to Miss Lambert's Fashion Hall of Fame of such troupers as "Mrs David Bruce, wife of the US Ambassador to Great Britain, Mrs Walther Moreira Salles, a Brazilian living in Paris, Mrs T. Charlton Henry, of Philadelphia, in her late 70s but still celebrated for her taste in dress, and Rosalind Russell, the film star". Three years on it was the same story. The Best Dressed Women included Countess Vera Lehndorff (a fashion mannequin known as Veruschka), Rome's Princess Luciana Pignatelli, and a New York socialite, Mrs Montague



Eleanor Lambert in 1966 (left) and now

Hackett. Scroll on a quarter of a century and the names on Miss Lambert's 1994 list seem to have faded to surprise Mrs Randolph Hearst, Princess Rosario of Bulgaria, Viscountess Linley and Harumi Klossowski de Rola.

By now there was a separate list for men which included John F. Kennedy Jr., a polo-laden fellow called Fernando de Cordoba Hohenlohe, our own Hugh Grant and Prince Kyri of Bulgaria. Mr Gross's list of trendy young men and women is a far cry from such refinement. Drew Barrymore is there, as is Brad Pitt's grungy flame Gwyneth Paltrow, Uma Thurman, Elle Macpherson and a fashion editor by the name of Cricket Telesco. From the boys, Mr Gross selects ill-shaven specimens such as Matt Dillon and Johnny Depp, an "in" Downtown bar owner called Eric Goode, a club promoter named Johnny Dymell and a ballet dancer called Jock Soto. For his

selection committee, Mr Gross has again gone for respectable hip. Conde Nast's James Truman is on it, as is Gucci's Tom Ford and a clutch of other designers. They were given the brief to be "irreverent and incorrigible", in opposition to Miss Lambert's more appreciative approach.

The *grande dame* herself reacts to questions about the turnout of Mr Gross with spectacular indifference. "Yes, I think I read about this," she told me. "I couldn't care less if he wants to do it." She "hoped" that her committee members will continue to "draw a line at this sort of list is 'an awfully easy way to fill up space in a magazine'". Miss Lambert may be in the autumn of her years, but she is relishing this fight. She noted that Madonna



Princess Lee Radziwill (left) was on Eleanor Lambert's best-dressed list in 1965. Michael Gross has included Elle Macpherson in this year's rival line-up



## ELEANOR LAMBERT'S LIST

Lady Sarah Chatto  
Veronica Hearst  
Viscountess Linley  
Princess Rosario  
Danielle Steele

F. de Cordoba  
Hugh Grant  
John Kennedy Jr  
Prince Kyri  
Henry Kravis

## MICHAEL GROSS'S LIST

Drew Barrymore  
India Hicks  
Elle Macpherson  
Winona Ryder  
Uma Thurman

William Baldwin  
Hannah Bowles  
Johnny Depp  
Matt Dillon  
John Kennedy Jr

is on Mr Gross's list. "Oh," she said faintly, demonstrating wicked humour. "I believe we had her on our list a number of years ago — when she was wearing innovative clothes. These days she is just a bizarre dancer, isn't she? It doesn't seem to have much to do with clothes any more."

Miss Lambert has tried to make her list younger. In 1994, for instance, she named "young internationals who figured prominently in the voting

without appearing in the final lists". These included Maria Estrany y Gendre, the daughter of the former Argentine Ambassador to the US, Countess Tatjana von Bismarck, who is walking out with John Colman of the mustard family, and Christopher Fitzwilliam-Lay, a British banker on Wall Street. Fitzwilliam-Lay was as surprised as his friends by his inclusion, given that he wears English suits and wears worn shirts. "My then girlfriend

was responsible, I think, but it put a spring in my step," he said. It also brought him a few satirical remarks from his workmates.

The Lambert/Gross battle is more than a skirmish off the catwalk. It is a dispute over the social helm of New York, a fight between Chanel fans and the Kate Spade handbag set, Upper East Side and Downtown. Miss Lambert, who has done so much for New York fashion, is game for the fray

and is a credit to her generation. Mr Gross, meanwhile, epitomises the iconoclastic wit of the modern age. Manhattanites are wary of saying which side they support.

Mr Gross's greatest triumph was arguably when he was still sitting on Miss Lambert's committee. After listening in despair to the seemingly endless array of counts, royalty, Southern dynasties and Bulgarian barons, he suggested the name of Queen Latifah, without mentioning that she is not actually royal but is a black rap singer. "Humm," replied the Lambert committee members, sucking on their pencils. "Interesting." It was then that Mr Gross recognised the task that lay before him, a task that Miss Lambert is determined the whippersnapper will not complete.

## Getting through the morning after the night before

HEAVY night, then?

Without doubt the most irritating rhetorical question in the world. Especially when you have arrived at the office shrunken-eyed, blotchy-skinned and with a head

intolerant of alien intrusion. The implication is that you have drunk foolishly the night before and will not be up to the daily workload.

But according to a report by Pennsylvania State University, the implication is wrong.

They exposed a group of managers to nearly four pints of beer over several hours, and found that their work the next morning was unaffected.

The findings were immediately pooh-poohed, however, by scientists and drinkers alike. Dr Barry Jones, a psychologist who specialises in alcohol research, raised the question of the quantity of alcohol administered, while legendary *bon vivant* Clement Freud was positively insulted.

"Four pints of beer is a ludicrous quantity," he ranted. "You can practically drive on that. If you can tie on the floor without holding on to anything then you are not technically drunk. And if you are really drunk you will be in no shape to work in the morning."

Anecdotal evidence is enough to corroborate Mr Freud's argument. We know

Hangovers are no problem, claim US scientists. Giles Coren wonders just what they have been drinking

that certain rudimentary and repetitive tasks can be performed by hung-over individuals, such as counting cursor blinks on a computer screen, or drawing grids on bits of paper and then filling in alternate squares. But such operations are hardly the stuff of economic revival.

The hangover is a densely shrouded in myth. There are little molasses such as "wine before beer and you'll feel queer" or "hair of the dog", and any number of offbeat cures, from raw eggs and lemon juice to the secret restorative prepared for Bertie Wooster by his gentleman's gentleman.

"Most of the received wis-

dom is nonsense," says Dr Bernard Dixon of the *Review of Alcohol Research*. "Hair of the dog is an excuse for alcoholics with tremors, and even fried breakfast and coffee are pointless. You get hangovers for two reasons. One is dehydration, which can be prevented by drinking water. The other is higher alcohols known as esters or congeners — organic substances the brain doesn't like."

"THESE are more prominent in sherry and brandy, say, than in vodka, which is relatively pure. Red wine has more than white, but cheap red wine is even worse. In short, the more complicated the mole-

cule the more likely you are to get a hangover."

Mixing drinks exposes you to more esters, but the order of drinking is immaterial. Likewise, people who stick to a regular tipple will develop a tolerance of its particular congeners. But if the habituated sherry-drinking granny succumbs to a drop of Baileys, the next morning's crocheting circle will be a write-off.

And a poll of clinical pharmacists soon wrote off the report. They all insisted that hangovers make you feel sick because of the production of acetaldehyde — a stimulant of nausea — by an overloaded liver. This would not happen at the low alcohol level maintained in the tested managers.

There is only one question troubling insiders this morning: what exactly were the Pennsylvanian researchers drinking the night before?

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# Victims of the safety first society

Magnus Linklater asks whether the medical profession should make outcasts of mere eccentrics

A friend of mine who has suffered from manic depression for many years finally felt well enough to apply for a voluntary job. He was interviewed and provisionally accepted. The idea was that he would start working with the local meals-on-wheels service, visiting old people in the company of an experienced hand. Provided all went well, he might move on to other duties. There was just one condition — he needed two references. He decided to ask his local GP, and the consultant psychiatrist who had helped him back to full health.

Both refused him the reference. Their reasons were depressing, if predictable. In the present climate of uncertainty about the treatment of mental patients, they had to act with extra caution; my friend had a history of mental illness, and they would be held accountable if anything went wrong; they felt that it would be safer all round if they withheld a recommendation. That he had been stable for a year, that he was a gentle soul with no history of violence and that he was especially good at working with people was less important than the potential risk.

All this took place well before the tragedy at Dunblane. I am afraid, however, that the savagery of Thomas Hamilton will have given those doctors little reason to change their minds. One of the many tragedies of that terrible day is that thousands of people trying to haul their way back into the mainstream of society will, for the time being, be tarred by the Hamilton brush. There will be no prizes for risk-taking when it comes to reappraising anyone with a history of mental illness. Could that shambaling figure muttering to himself on the street corner be a child-killer? Should that mental patient, recently discharged from hospital, be taken back inside — just in case? As one psychiatrist with a practice in the Dunblane area told me last week: "My first thought, when I heard of the shootings, was: 'Could it be one of mine?'"

In the aftermath of that disaster, every instinct will be to tighten up on the way society deals with its more fragile members. Psychiatrists will be urged to review their lists, to pass on doubts they may have about dubious individuals to the local police, to become, as it were, a filtering system for the nation's misfits. When it comes to gun controls, there is likely to be pressure for some kind of psychological profiling before licences are handed out.

There will be hard questions asked, too, about the Government's care in the community scheme, which was designed to release patients back into society. The initial argument for that policy was that reintegrating those with a history of mental illness, rather than shutting them away, would encourage tolerance and understanding.

Instead, as a result of a few violent incidents, it has had the reverse effect. Even the mildly eccentric or the vaguely loopy are now seen as potentially menacing.

It is to be hoped that Lord Cullen's inquiry will encompass this aspect of the Dunblane disaster as well as the immediate question of gun controls. But whatever conclusions he comes to, it would be a mistake to expect police, psychiatrists or social workers to close up all the gaps which the Hamilton case has revealed. After all, the most worrying aspect of his story is not that he slipped through the net, but that he was able to avoid it altogether. He had no criminal record, he appears not to have been a psychiatric patient, and despite all the gossip and the rumours about his deviant nature, he was allowed to carry on for year after year with his youth work, until finally deprived of the means to do so. It was this deprivation which, ironically, drove him to exact his revenge.

During the many investigations of Hamilton's running complaints, whether by councillors, politicians, or the officially appointed ombudsman, most people gave him the benefit of the doubt because they were induced by a sense of decency and fair play. The ombudsman in particular, called in to decide whether he had been unfairly deprived of the means to continue his youth work, concluded that he was the victim of ill-founded gossip and innuendo, and ruled in his favour. In the light of this, it is very hard to assign blame to any of those who dealt with him — even the luckless police officer who signed his firearms certificate. There was, as in any civilised society, a presumption of innocence rather than guilt.

So it would be a terrible setback if, as a result of what happened in Dunblane, the traditional role of the medical services — to heal and to rehabilitate — were undermined; if psychiatric care were judged not by its success in easing the mentally ill back into circulation, but by its ability to isolate them; or if rumour and suspicion became sufficient reasons for refusing employment. What does need to be ensured is that sensible gun controls are introduced so that no one — whether a potential hitman or a careless Olympic marksman — is allowed open access to such deadly weapons.

My friend's tale, I am glad to say, does have a happy ending. He went back to the voluntary agency, which said that despite the psychiatrists' doubts it was perfectly happy to accept other, favourable, references. He is now working happily with a youth project, which enjoys his contribution as much as he appreciates being able to take the first step back into becoming a full and productive member of society.

Even the vaguely loopy are now seen as menacing



## A poet rudely great

The sale of Pope's grotto serves to remind us of a poet who delighted in both satire and friendship

Alexander Pope is associated with many houses, with Prior Park in Bath, with Stanton Harcourt near Oxford, with Stowe in Buckinghamshire, even with Buckingham Palace, which he knew when it was a much prettier and rather smaller building. There are two brilliant engravings of old Buckingham House in Pope's 1723 edition of the Works of John, Duke of Buckingham. Pope's own villa at Twickenham was pulled down in the 19th century, just as Shakespeare's house at Stratford-on-Avon was pulled down in the 18th, but the grotto Pope designed has survived, together with the convent that was eventually built on the site. Twickenham still has his tomb in the church — grave-robbing with an interest in phrenology are said to have stolen his skull — as well as that beautiful house, Marble Hill, where he used to visit Lady Suffolk, George II's deaf but delightful mistress.

According to The Times Diary, the convent and the grotto are now to be sold: there are proposals to turn the site into a memorial both to Pope and to the landscape movement which he encouraged. As a Somerset man, I have mixed feelings about the grotto itself: Pope's friend Dr Oliver, the inventor of the Bath Oliver biscuit, probably the finest biscuit ever baked, sawed off stalactites from Wooley Hole to ornament the grotto, and had a bath named there in his honour.

I believe that many people's characters are shaped by the authors whom they most admire and read again and again. No doubt everyone who went through the full educational process of my generation was influenced by Shakespeare and the Authorized Version of the Bible, the twin pillars of English culture in the mid 20th century. Four other authors have gripped my particular temperament and interests: two philosophers, John Locke and William James, one moral critic, Samuel Johnson, and one poet, Alexander Pope. To each of them I owe a debt comparable to that to my closest friends and most influential teachers. I should be a different person without them. I feel about all of them much as Thomas Gainsborough felt about Van Dyke. His last words were said to have been: "We are all going to heaven, and Van Dyke is of the company." Pope himself shared this conviction of personal survival. A few days before his death in 1744, he said: "I am so

certain of the soul's being immortal that I feel it within me, as it were by intuition". My closeness to Pope started with my using him as an example of how to write. When I was at Charterhouse I even tried to imitate him directly, writing heroic couplets which were, I am sure, a miserable pastiche. One can only benefit from a study of any author's style when that author's work has been fully internalised, has become part of the fabric of one's own mind. For the writer of English, Pope is an essential model.

Pope's poetry is concise, energetic, ironic, clear and vivid. He uses visual images and contrast with great skill. As Lytton Strachey observed, no author has ever packed more meaning into each phrase and each line, yet one never has the stifling feeling of excessive density. When Voltaire was a young man, he came to England. In 1726 he wrote a charming letter sympathising with Pope after a carriage accident in which Pope had been "thrown into the river (Thames) with the glasses of the coach up, and was up to the knots of his periwig in water". Pope had received a bad cut on his hand; Voltaire wrote that the "accident concerns me as much as all the disasters of a master ought to affect his scholar".

Voltaire came to write French prose better than it had been written before or since, so well that his style is the style of educated France. Voltaire has exactly the combination of energy, lucidity and conciseness which is so marked in Pope's poetry. Pope's own phrase for it is "easy vigour"; that must still be the aim of every writer who wishes his meaning to have force, and his readers to enjoy reading what he writes.

Not everyone finds it easy to love Pope. He had a joy in combat which reflects the pain of his life. He was satirical by nature, he was devious and he was conscious of being a cripple. For his disability it is easy to

sympathise with him, but one has to accept that he took delight in tormenting his enemies: one can imagine Lord Hervey at the breakfast table reading the character of Sporus:

Yet let me flap this bug with glittering wings,  
This painted child of dirt that stinks and stings;  
Whose buzz the windy and the fair amuse,  
Yet who's not valued, and beauty's never enjoys;  
So well bred spaniels civilly delight  
In ruminating of the game they dare not bite.

Even now the accusation of androgynous impotence is rarely made, though we regard ourselves as more free-spoken than our 18th-century ancestors. Pope's darts go to the heart, and many of them are tipped with venom.

I am drawn to Pope partly because I share both his enjoyment of controversy in print and his liking for easy relations in person. Like him, I find it hard to resist making sharp comments on public characters — Hervey was a minister in Walpole's Government. I also share his preference for rows in print to those in person. I often use his phrases, sometimes even storing them up. I am still waiting for the public scandal worthy of the line, "And the fresh vomit run forever green".

In company, Pope was mild; despite his verbal skills, he would not have enjoyed mixing it on the box with the dunces of our age. He was also a good and loyal friend. Apart from problems that arose from women — he exchanged unforgetting insults with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu and had a coolness even with the benevolent Ralph Allen over an apparent slight to his friend Martha Blount — he kept most of his friends for a lifetime. They were remarkable people, including Jonathan Swift. His letters illustrate his friendships.

William Rees-Mogg

## A party of the nation?

Tories expect more than words, says Bill Cash

Today the Commons debates the White Paper on Europe, to which I replied yesterday in my own Blue Paper. This debate is so fundamental to the future of Britain that both Government and Opposition thought it wise to bury the issue with a one-line whip. This shows how far the Europeanisation of Britain has undermined the vitality and integrity of British politics.

The essence of British conservatism is that we retain through our Parliament the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances while insisting on the fixed and immutable principles of democracy, accountability and self-government. No British Government has the right to give this inheritance away.

The process of European integration contradicts these principles. The White Paper, high on rhetoric, is low on principle and silent on renegotiation of Britain's position. When I proposed putting monetary union on the agenda of the inter-governmental conference (IGC), so that this matter could be discussed as a question of principle, the Foreign Secretary replied: "I do not follow your suggestion that it is a matter of principle." The White Paper speaks of our need to be "realistic about the sort of changes we can hope to achieve at the IGC... If we were to press ideas which stand no chance of general acceptance, some others would seek to impose an integrationist agenda which would be equally unacceptable." This is not realism; it is defeatism, even appeasement. It betrays a deeper problem, which the White Paper avoids, a stubborn refusal to renegotiate the Maastricht treaty despite all the evidence of its failure — in the areas of jobs, the exchange-rate mechanism, monetary union, Bosnia and fishing. We must reduce the powers of the Court of Justice by reducing the competences already granted. Maastricht entails an integrationist programme for European government, which must be repealed.

Speaking last month in Louvain, Chancellor Kohl failed to distinguish between nationalism and the democratic nation-state, when he threatened that the failure of European integration would lead to war. The truth is that we run this risk if we undermine the democratic nation-state. Chancellor Kohl insisted that "German unity and European integration are two sides of... the same coin". The Treaty on European Union is the acquisition of power by other means.

This issue should not be seen as a matter of left or right, but as a matter of national interest, on which the British people have a right to a referendum. There is yet time to resolve these questions, for the IGC does not begin until March 29, and will continue until after the general election. This raises the question of the Conservative Party manifesto and the Labour Party.

The failure of the exchange-rate mechanism before our exit on September 16, 1992, severely damaged the Conservatives' credibility in government, but we are steadily recovering it. The party must show the British people that this debacle could not happen again, by ruling out the exchange-rate mechanism and monetary union in our manifesto and during the inter-governmental conference.

The Labour Party is trapped. Gordon Brown says he wants managed exchange rates and monetary union. But if we Conservatives rule this out in our manifesto, we can demonstrate that Labour will be unable to fulfil its promises about jobs, health, education, public expenditure and a host of other issues. To fail to do so would be to throw away our best weapon in the general election. This involves renegotiating Maastricht, and perhaps telling the other EU members that otherwise we will veto the IGC.

Our British identity and independence have been withering in the face of attacks by Brussels, power-play in Germany and France, and the activities of Euro-fanatics at home. Conservatives must now match the rhetoric of the White Paper by putting British interests first when it comes to policy. We have been treated with too much contempt for too long by those with whom we have tried to co-operate. We can and will work with our partners in Europe, but only on mutual terms, not simply on theirs. We will not be trampled on. We will not watch as our laws are overturned by the Court of Justice and our institutions, which have stood the test of time, are derided and treated as hollow. We have saved Britain and Europe twice in a century, and we are now called upon to do so again.

If we do not regain for ourselves the only sovereignty which really counts, which is the political will and authority of a democratic nation, we shall deserve to fail. Then we shall enter a dark age of subordination to the will of others, and the Conservative Party will lose its *raison d'être*. As Disraeli said, "the Tory Party is a national party or it is nothing".

The author is Conservative MP for Stafford. The Blue Paper is available from The European Foundation, 1 Pall Mall, London SW1 (ES).

P.H.S

## About time

JOHN MAJOR'S great scheme to embarrass companies into paying their bills on time has sent one little firm into a flurry of activity. Thwaites & Reed, one of the oldest clockmakers in the country, has reorganised its business so that it can sue the Government for unpaid bills — while continuing to work for it.

The firm, founded in 1740, attends to Big Ben's repairs as well as mending external clocks on royal palaces. It is planning to sue for debts of more than £200,000 run up by Whitehall.

The bills date back many years, to when Whitehall scrapped internal agencies within the Department of the Environment without paying off the money they owed to Thwaites & Reed. The clockmaker has been on a fruitless paper chase to try to recover its money, and is now resorting to the courts.

"It was only recently that we were able to rearrange the business so that we could sue while at the same time carrying on our work for the Government," says Melvyn Lee, who owns the company. "We never thought of carrying out a credit check."

Bong!

Amid the latest flurry over "mad cow" disease, Douglas Hogg is undaunted. The Minister of Agriculture was in the Members' dining room of the Commons on Tuesday, digging unashamedly into a piled plate of roast beef.

China shop  
OXFORD University's Bullingdon Club, a tail-coated organisation



given to indiscriminate room-trashing and indiscriminate strip-tease, is to let rip in the Natural History Museum. The famously debauched dining society has booked the main hall of the museum for its first ball in decades, on June 14.

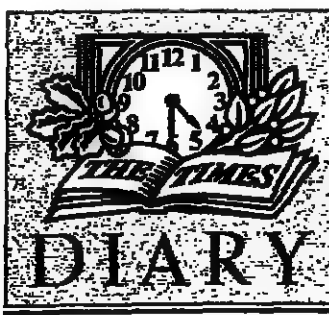
All members past and present — ranging from Lord Longford, prison visitor, to Darius Guppy, former prison resident — have been invited to shimmy around the skeletons.

The Natural History Museum, which rents out its main hall for £5,500 a night, seems to be unaware of the club's reputation for debagging, lobster-throwing and rolling mobile loos down hills. "We have a booking for the Oxford University Club," said a member of the booking staff. "That sounds respectable enough." They could end up with a large pile of bones.

### Foxed

THE BROTHERS FOX (Edward and James) have been working together at last. Yesterday, they were at an advance screening of *Gulliver's Travels*, their first ever collaboration, which goes out on Channel 4 from this Sunday, and spent the time teasing people who had confused them.

"We do look a lot like each other



and people seem to get us mixed up even more muddle," said James. Edward chimed in with a viewing tip: "I'm the one with the bigger wig," he said proudly of the powdered bouffant he sports.

### As was

THE PORTRAIT painter André Durand, whose endeavours on canvas can be as saccharine as Anna Pasternak's prose, has whipped out his pallet again. After his extraordinary portrait of the Prince of Wales and the young Prince William and Harry in baseball caps astride a charger, he has turned his attention to the Queen.

Not, however, Her Majesty as she is today, with occasional wrinkles and slightly greying hair, but as a young woman in the bloom of

youth. "I am painting her in her twenties, as a tender and sensual beauty in a purple robe against a red sky surrounded by North American Indians. It is going to be called *White Magic*."

### Battle of...

MY SUGGESTION that the Editor of the *Evening Standard*, Max Hastings, might care to buy the title Baron Hastings of Hastings (for sale at £25,000-£30,000) has gone down poorly with the 22nd Baron Hastings (title created in 1290). "I shall have to contact my solicitor," he thundered yesterday. "No one else is entitled to call himself Lord Hastings. It's totally fraudulent and I have plenty of heirs to follow me."

Strutt & Parker, who are advertising the sale, stand by the proffered barony. "The whole thing has been fully researched and it is available for sale."

### Second look

DENNIS POTTER *aficionados* may care to take notice of Keeley Hawes, a 20-year-old model, who will be making something of a splash as the female star of *Karneoke*. She plays opposite Richard E. Grant in the television mini-series.



Keeley: part work

one of the late playwright's last works, to be screened next month. She confesses that she is new to stardom. "I play a model who gets a film part because she is having an affair with the director, and it all starts to get a bit seedy," she says. "My biggest part previously was when I was at the National Theatre aged 12. I played a child prostitute."





## BOVINE ALARM

British beef eaters face an uncertain future

The announcement by Stephen Dorrell of new evidence suggesting a link between bovine spongiform encephalopathy, "mad cow" disease, and its equivalent in humans, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, is alarming. The Health Secretary admitted to the House that fresh investigations had identified a "previously unrecognised and consistent disease pattern". Sir Kenneth Calman, the Chief Medical Officer, would be giving doctors the latest scientific advice, he said, announcing a further £4.5 million for urgent research into the illness.

After an orchestrated campaign of reassurance, Mr Dorrell's statement will provoke widespread anxiety about the prevalence and nature of BSE and the efficacy of measures taken so far to prevent the degenerative brain disease vaulting from cows to humans. Harriet Harman, the Shadow Health Secretary, provoked anger among backbenchers from farming constituencies with her accusation of "too much reassurance and too little action". But she reflected the public mood when she spoke of "fear stoked up by ignorance and innuendo".

The Government has certainly acted honourably in placing these latest findings before the House and admitting that there is cause for concern. Assessing any new disease is extremely difficult. On the one hand, the Government is dependent on information from scientists and epidemiologists, who may have only incomplete evidence and may differ in its interpretation. On the other hand, the Government is expected to give a lead and to balance the interests of public health against those of important sectors such as agriculture and industry, and the country's international links and obligations.

The most difficult balance of all is between fostering complacency and inducing panic. With Aids, the Government has generally struck the right note; with BSE the record is more dismal. Each fresh statement seems to undercut the preceding one. With every

attempt to lay out the latest scientific advice and prudent counsel the Government appears to retreat from lofty certainty and make its earlier stance look like culpable insouciance.

The result, predictably, is cynicism and confusion. This latest statement will fuel consumer alarm. Farmers are bracing themselves for a catastrophic fall in beef sales and consumption; exports are likely to suffer and not only in Germany; hospitals, schools and other public canteens may find themselves under increasing pressure to ban beef altogether.

Whether this will cause the Government political damage depends on two questions. How much was the initial attempt to reassure the nation dictated by pressure from Britain's farmers? And how rigorous was the Government in enforcing preventative measures suited to a worst case scenario?

So far there is no clear evidence of a cover-up; indeed yesterday's parliamentary statement came within hours of independent scientific advice suggesting a possible link in CJD victims to exposure to BSE before the offal ban was introduced in 1989. The second question cannot be so reassuringly answered: it took too long before new rules were introduced for abattoirs and proper inspection was enforced. If the Government failed to provide enough officials and vets to police the new rules, it shares in any culpability. John Gummer's publicity stunt of feeding his daughter a hamburger was distasteful at the time and could now be seen as misleading as well.

Ministerial resolution suggests that, short of eliminating Britain's beef herds, as much as being done as possible to combat BSE. The worry is that with such long incubation periods, it will be years before any increase in CJD infection due to BSE is known. The figures so far are very small but the trend is portentous. Britain may face a wave of cases contracted in childhood that only become apparent years from now.

## INDIA AT RISK

Political decay compromises economic reforms

The conduct of regular elections makes India unusual in the Asian continent. The country's electorate — numbering over 600 million — will vote for a new administration in April, and should do so in the well-oiled way of the "world's largest democracy". But India's 11th elections, called on Tuesday by P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister, also promise to guide the country into virgin political territory.

The ruling Congress Party, which has been in power almost without interruption since 1947 — the year of India's independence from Britain — cannot be certain this time of retaining its grip on the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament. How will this affect India? Should the world worry if Mr Rao loses his parliamentary majority? Will the country's economic reforms survive, unscathed, a shift in the balance of power? The answers to these questions are not simple ones, and rightly worry observers in India and abroad. No elections in India's half-century of independence have been as difficult to forecast as these will be.

Three broad political groupings — the Congress Party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of the Hindu Right, and the National/Left Front — are vying for power and the voters' attention. But if the result is a coalition government (something which has never occurred before in Delhi in any meaningful sense, but which is widely predicted by Indian observers), Mr Rao will have to be a part of any formation.

That should comfort those who believe that India must not abandon its present path of economic reform. Mr Rao and Manmohan Singh, the cerebral Finance Minister, have together extricated India from the Fabian morass into which it had been plunged by decades of dirigiste rule.

Responsibility for India's previous economic stagnation rests squarely with Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister, and Indira Gandhi, his autocratic daughter. In blind pursuit of a Soviet model of development — marked by hubristic notions of "self-reliance", centralised economic planning and a deep-rooted suspicion of foreign investment — they impoverished India to such an extent that history will surely judge them more harshly than did contemporary accounts of their rule.

A commitment to a free economy is now shared, to varying degrees, by all three major parties. Yet there is more to the making of alliances than a party's attitude to the economy: Right and Left, in sharp disagreement over the issue of India's religious minorities, will never share power. Only the Congress party — a broad temple if ever there was one — has the ideological flexibility to tie a knot of government with either the BJP or the National/Left Front. Whereas an absolute Congress majority would suit the country best, an alliance with the BJP would not be a bad outcome for India. A spell in power in Delhi could have a sobering effect on the latter's strident "Hinduness", while at the same time taking account of the increasingly irrepressible concerns of a section of India's religious majority.

But the most important task for all parties is a regeneration of India's political institutions, as well as faith in the country's politicians. As the country's economy has opened itself to global influences its polity has sunk ever more deeply into decay and corruption. No party can claim to be free from taint; no party can claim that it need not improve itself. Corruption may not lose Mr Rao the next elections, but it has already lost him the voters' respect.

## STROKE YOUR RESOURCES

Corporate teamwork is one ideal: to scratch a living is another

To err is human but to forgive with a smile may soon be company policy. Buddhist techniques are being introduced to the City of London by management consultants. Standard Chartered Bank has decided to teach its executives Japanese *kaizen* teamwork and continuous self-appraisal. What other breezes can we expect from the wet wind of change now blowing through the jungle?

Human resources used to be called personnel or people management. A management consultant was somebody who told management what it already knew but packaged it differently. But until now the City has tended to stress the individualist Whittington and Scrooge principles and to discount the damp Andrew Carnegie and John Lewis partnership mirage of teamwork between company workers. Compulsory teamwork and collective empowerment were strictly for the birds — or for those motors for human resources in Japanese manufacturing companies such as Nissan and Toyota.

The new City techniques sound both gung-ho and pi. They offer more than a whiff of American tele-evangelism. One axiom is that every day a manager should do "two acts of random kindness". Most executives, if forced to such measures by a

weekend of executive games, will get their acts of random kindness over early in the day. A human resources manager with his arm around a human resource risks being treated like a treasurer with his hand in the till. It is one thing to recommend praising subordinates and smiling more, another to introduce this to those City folk suspicious of any smiles other than Samuel and resentful of praise other than self-praise.

Maxims for subordinate-friendly management include getting rid of Mickey Mouse rules that belittle people. But surely enforcement and complaints about petty rules, such as no-smoking areas or canteen opening hours, provide the most interesting times for office workers. Japanese Happy Hour teamwork meetings offend British reticence, diffidence and dislike of putting oneself forward.

This new Zen Buddhist method of motivating managers may triumph yet. Where Coca-Cola and British Petroleum are experimenting, other would-be corporate evangelists may follow. But the engines of the markets until now have been money and individualism. The spirit of team games, invented by the British, is to play up, play up and play the game without much self-appraisal or confession of sins, let alone a mantra.

## Checks on reasons for gun ownership

From the Reverend Michael J. Ward

Sir, As parish minister of a rural community I am often called upon to act as a referee in countering fire-arms applications. The majority of these are made by farmers and gamekeepers whose livelihood requires the use of a weapon for pest control or the shooting of game; in these cases I am happy to oblige, after asking a few questions.

On one particular occasion I did not feel that the applicant was suitable to hold a weapon or that his reasons were entirely legitimate. I therefore refused to countersign his application. But I also knew that he was free to seek other referees who might not share my misgivings. My conscience was clear, but that is of no consequence if an applicant is determined to obtain a licence and is no help to the community in which he lives.

May I suggest that Lord Cullen and those entrusted with reviewing gun legislation (report, March 15) in the aftermath of last week's tragedy consider introducing a firearms application form with a tear-off slip with boxes to be ticked by the referee "suitable" or "unsuitable". The referee would be required by law to remove and complete this after speaking to the applicant (but without disclosing his verdict), and then post it to the police officer in charge of processing applications.

Such a suggestion would not only give referees the opportunity to give unbiased and confidential advice, but it would also prevent potential gun-users taking their applications, intact, around the community until a favourable signature is obtained.

Yours faithfully,  
M. WARD,  
St Madocs Manse, Glencorse, Perth.  
March 19.

From Mrs Christine Makin

Sir, Checks on the suitability of people to own and use firearms should be made more frequently than at five-year intervals. Much can happen in five years to alter people's suitability.

Yours faithfully,  
CHRISTINE MAKIN,  
The Lodge, 103 Fore Street,  
Plymouth, Devon.  
March 14.

From Dr D. F. Severs

Sir, Mr McKelvie (letter, March 15) maintains that "every kitchen, garden shed or garage contains objects and substances that have lethal potential if malevolently used".

Which objects or substances in my kitchen, garden shed or garage could be used to kill 17 and injure 14 in a matter of minutes?

Yours faithfully,  
D. F. SEVERS,  
29 Crestbrook,  
Northallerton, North Yorkshire.  
March 15.

From Mr Jerome Gardner

Sir, Your leader "Armour and light" (March 16) supplied some interesting historical information on the Royal Armouries Museum. However, surely there should have been some mention therein — or at least elsewhere in that issue — of the shocking misjudgment on the part of officialdom which resulted in the Queen's unaltered visit to Leeds at a time while national feelings are running so high in the wake of the slaughter at Dunblane.

Yours faithfully,  
JEROME GARDNER,  
Mortcombe, Cherry Bridge,  
Barbrook, Lynton, Devon.  
March 16.

## Nature of evil

From the Chaplain of St Andrew's Hospital, Northampton

Sir, Many people, including my friend and mentor the Bishop of Edinburgh (Credo, March 14), have spoken of "evil" in connection with the Dunblane killer. It seems virtually certain that Thomas Hamilton was severely mentally disordered. Is mental disorder to be equated with evil?

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN CAMP,  
St Andrew's Hospital,  
Billing Road, Northampton.  
March 14.

From Mr J. H. Rogers

Sir, Senior Churchmen and politicians have spoken of "evil", "brutality" and the need for prayers for the families of the Dunblane victims.

But is this not an abrogation of responsibility by those who should lead public opinion and hold the high moral ground? Surely they must realise that this was an accident caused by a mentally sick man and that this is no time for the language of Salem.

Do not his family deserve their prayers too?

Yours sincerely,  
JOHN ROGERS,  
41 Druidville Road, Liverpool 18.  
March 15.

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Sports letters, page 42

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

## Privatisation of Civil Service agency

From Sir Brian Barber

Sir, Peter Riddell's article (March 15) about the Government's defeat in the House of Lords over its plan to sell off Recruitment and Assessment Services (RAS), the agency responsible among other things for Civil Service fast-stream selection and recruitment, was welcome and timely, especially in its conclusion that the best course would be to drop the plan altogether.

But it is not right to say that opposition to the Government's proposal in recent months has been confined to "the great and the good from the 1960s and 1970s", as Peter Riddell calls them.

As one of RAS's current panel of assessors (who has gone into print and been otherwise active in opposition to RAS privatisation) and as a retired diplomat, who served as a head of mission in the 1980s and 1990s, I am far from unique among opponents of privatisation in being of rather more recent vintage.

Equally significant has been the extent of opposition to privatisation on the part of those, younger still, who are professionally debared from expressing their views in public the serving civil servants who act as departmental assessors in the RAS assessment and recruitment process.

It is widely known that many of these, all exceptionally well placed to make an informed judgment, view the prospect of privatisation with concern and dismay.

One cannot attribute the views of these people, mainly in mid-career, to nostalgia or to the gut conservatism of declining years. Nor are their views coloured by self-interest: assessors, or their departments, could expect to be

considerably better rewarded if fees were set at market rates after privatisation.

Yours truly,  
BRIAN BARBER,  
10 Melrose Road,  
Southfields, SW18.  
March 17.

From Lord Bancroft

Sir, Mr Peter Riddell's account of the House of Lords debate on March 8 is welcome, instructive and resoundingly right in its conclusions.

It also holds out the agreeable conceit of "an element of the retired Permanent Secretaries' club" operating in the debate. I doubt whether Lords Callaghan, Jenkins of Hillhead, Kennet, Bruce of Donington, McIntosh of Haringey and Baroness Williams of Crosby, or Lords Peyton, Rippon or Marlesford (mentioned in the piece) would thank him for implying that they were members of such a club. They all spoke in the debate, as of course did others not fitting his description.

A glance at the list of the 124 peers who voted for my amendment, and against the Government, shows 117 as non-members of the club. And 13 were Conservatives, of whom five were former ministers. Indeed, with two exceptions, every former minister taking part in the division voted against the Government, irrespective of party. I make that 26 ministers compared with seven Permanent Secretaries.

Whose club?

Yours faithfully,  
BANCROFT,  
House of Lords,  
March 15.

## Sale of HMSO

From Mr Stephen Saxby

Sir, The Government's plans to sell off Her Majesty's Stationery Office (report, *The Sunday Times*, February 4; letter, December 28, 1995) and its policy on the administration of Crown copyright (parliamentary written answers to Lord Lester of Herne Hill, *Hansard*, March 13, 1996) are of significant concern to universities.

It is questionable whether the Government's intention to make official information as widely and readily available as possible, taking into account the need to protect the interests of the taxpayer, can be guaranteed without further clarification.

Under present arrangements university libraries have been able to negotiate a price with HMSO for selective subscription to official publications, but since future negotiation on pricing will be with the private-sector purchaser of HMSO, will the Government make any provision for such arrangements to continue?

An increasing volume of official publications will appear in electronic formats. Present charging policy has been to seek a commercial return on information in this form on a quite separate basis to the educational price concessions negotiated for traditional printed formats.

If too much emphasis is placed on treating official information as a

tradeable commodity within a controlled commercial market, the broader objective of securing access and use of this valuable resource to improve the competitiveness of the nation will be undermined.

Many governments have prepared public-sector national information infrastructure plans designed to exploit the potential of the Internet. An announcement on February 9 by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster that the full text of all new Acts will be published on the Internet is a small but welcome step, but it remains only a concession. Much more use could be made of this resource for the distribution and exploitation of official information if the Government were minded to do so.

Perhaps there is something to be said for the United States approach to this issue. In 1995 it legislated to prevent government agencies restricting or regulating the use, resale, or re-distribution of public information or the levying of user fees that exceed the distribution cost.

Maybe the time has come for the Government to take a closer look at how its information policy is working and to reassess its medium and long-term goals.

Yours sincerely,  
STEPHEN SAXBY,  
University of Southampton,  
Faculty of Law,  
Highfield, Southampton SO17 1BJ.

## Teaching standards

From Mr Michael Paffard

Sir, Mrs Douglas Heyman (letter, March 13) should be reminded that "trendy" is hardly an appropriate insult to throw at a child-centred rather than a subject-centred approach to the education of young children. What she calls "the well tried disciplines of the classroom" worked, after a fashion, for a minority of children, usually from supportive homes. They kept the majority quiet and obedient until they escaped into a life often of manual labour.

Child-centred principles are often only half-heartedly practised in under-resourced schools designed for the sort of formal chalk-and-talk instruction your correspondent approves. We shall find the way forward not by putting the clock back but by properly supporting and improving a trained teaching profession.

Yours faithfully,  
MICHAEL PAFFARD,  
3 Church Bank, Keele, Staffordshire.  
March 14.

From Mr Martyn Beckett

Sir, I find the tone of Mrs Heyman's letter benighted and simplistic. My ex-

perience over 18 years in the classroom is that there is often much to be said for dispensing with the format of children sitting in serried ranks of desks.

Tables do not have to be "dotted about". Teachers do more than make "odd visits", and what is wrong with a "cosy chat" by way of offering reassurance and encouragement?

It is ironic that you published a report on the same day that Britain boasts the longest working week in Europe. We send our children to nurseries earlier and earlier, presumably — by some blind and erroneous logic — to get them ahead in the rat race.

For rats, read chickens. Do we want "battery" at the expense of "free-range"? A certain amount of freedom undoubtedly helps to develop those qualities which are so valuable in business, industry and other areas of adult life, and I find that sympathy, understanding, flexibility and initiative are most effectively nurtured in a variety of working conditions.

Yours faithfully,  
MARTYN BECKETT,  
The Cottage,  
Yarlet Hall, Stafford.  
March 14.

## Cherie Blair

From Mr Peter Hitchens

Sir, Nigella Lawson ("Cherie" got them on the run", March 13) misunderstands my interest in Cherie Booth's 1983 campaign for Parliament. I am seeking public documents, recollections of speeches made at open meetings and nothing else.

My investigation has nothing to do with Ms Booth's blameless personal life, nor with some Freudian fear of powerful women, but with a subject which rarely comes up these days: the actual political views and instincts of Labour's elite.

Ms Booth has been a politician in her own right, addressing meetings for Labour Party platforms, and can reasonably be assumed to hold strong convictions. Had her husband not been selected for a safe seat, she might well now grace the Shadow Cabinet while he toiled at the Bar.

Because of this accident of history, she has not had to go through the embarrassing and painful public recantation of the policies on which she once stood for office, and which is so essential for Opposition frontbenchers that the road to Damascus is now badly congested. Maybe she has changed her mind, maybe not. But in any case, it is an important political topic. When an entire party declares that it didn't mean a word of its manifesto and that everything it ever stood for is now so much garbage, the press is entitled to investigate.

If the response of the Labour press to my inquiry — involving personal attacks on me — is anything to go by, I fear for freedom of the press under a Blair government.

Yours faithfully,  
PETER HITCHENS,  
*The Daily Express*,  
245 Blackfriars Road, SE1.  
March 14.

## Having a flutter — reality and fantasy

From Mr Toby Jessel, MP for Twickenham (Conservative)

Sir, Professor Tim Congdon ("How the lottery robs us", March 15) is of course right that purposefully invested savings are a more efficient way to save money than playing the National Lottery. However, he ignores the fact that most adults enjoy the freedom of deciding whether to have a weekly flutter.

The evidence to date shows that playing is spread fairly evenly across social and economic groups. The average household weekly spend on the National Lottery is less than the price of renting a video film. It is also clear where lottery money has been going: over one million prize-winners every week, with 353 jackpot wins so far, and 5,000-plus charities, sports, arts and community groups which, in the first year, have been awarded over £1 billion.

The Prime Minister believes that the lottery can provide the nation with leisure and culture facilities which allow everyone in this country to share in opportunities that were once available only to the privileged few. Such facilities will never have first call on the public purse, but the lottery releases funds to help regenerate our communities, while allowing each of us a fleeting fantasy.

Our National Lottery is highly regulated, and the financial accounts of the distribution of lottery proceeds are subject to annual scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee. Nobody is forced to play, and Government has no role in telling people how to spend their money.

Professor Congdon may have his finger on the pulse of the economy, but he is misinformed about the lottery, and on this issue he is out of step with public opinion.

Yours truly,  
TOBY JESSEL (Chairman,  
Conservative Parliamentary  
Arts and Heritage Committee),  
House of Commons,  
March 15.

From the Reverend Roger Driver

Sir, Tim Congdon is absolutely right. As someone who lives and works in an urban priority area on the edge of Liverpool, I am aware of how many families are drawn into the false hopes of the lottery.

Many decent people here are struggling to bring up children against the backdrop of social deprivation and real poverty. On very low wages, or unemployed and on social security benefits, they are spending disproportionate amounts of money week by week on the minute chance of a big win.

What an indictment of our society. Many families I know are living permanently in a fantasy land that is shattered every Saturday — to be relieved the following week.

People of Fazzakerley and elsewhere deserve better. They deserve to be able to grasp real opportunities based on achievable hopes for a better life. In my parish I have seen people achieve self-employment through simple self-help projects like those financed by the Church Urban Fund (through congregations' donations).

There should be more opportunities of this kind and — as Professor Congdon called for — for advancement through the old virtues of "thrift and hard work".

Yours sincerely,  
ROGER DRIVER (Team vicar),  
St Paul's, Fazzakerley, Merseyside.  
March 15.

## Raising the tone

From Mr Don Bradbury

Sir, Surely there is an American influence in accounting for the current speech pattern of many young British people ("Soap opera Australian-speak raises the tone", report, March 19). The Australian influence is a modern phenomenon to all but cricket and tennis fans, whereas for many decades, in films and TV shows, we have suffered the American proclivity for a questioning intonation with a rise in voice pitch at the end of a sentence.

I'm no language expert, but I believe our own antipodeans simply copied the Americans, as we do, and the Americans possibly inherited the custom in the first place from their Irish immigrants. But I agree, the habit is likely to imply insecurity, a desire for agreement, and is a self-effacing stance in an uncertain world.

The other possibility is that it simply means "do you know what I'm talking about?" and the habit is slightly preferable to the increasingly used "yes?" or worse still "ya?", after every statement.

Yours faithfully,  
DON BRADBURY,  
6 Solway Rise, Dronfield Woodhouse,  
Sheffield, South Yorkshire.  
March 19.

## Spring in the air?

From Mrs Angela Tremayne

Sir, I note the claim by Government experts that spring cleaning is "easier and more enjoyable than other forms of exercise" (report, March 20). Whoever thinks that has clearly never done any.

Yours faithfully,  
ANGELA TREMAYNE,  
1 Old London Road, Milton Common,  
Thame, Oxfordshire.  
March 20.







# GEORGE BANKOFF

He was entitled to practise in Britain by virtue of his Italian qualifications but after suffering some deprecating comments on these from British col-



It was during the war, when he worked as a surgeon in the Emergency Medical Service, that he became interested in the new science of plastic

He was still practising privately well into his seventies, but had left Harley Street by the early 1970s. He continued to divide his time thereafter between these three countries.

Bankoff married in 1939 Jannette Ollingdale, by whom he had two sons and two daughters, all of whom survive him.

**BARRY APPLEBY**

Arthur Christiansen, the Editor of the *Express* who had seen it become the first daily paper to reach a circulation of



opposite of Gaye. She was hard-headed, a brilliant manager of her husband's finances and herself a substantial contributor to the strip cartoon.

Barry and Dobs Appleby had no children.

# OLGA RUDGE

to clear his name. In 1948 she published drafts of some of his wartime broadcasts under the heading *If This Be Treason?* Her selection — which included talks on Henry James's use of the parenthesis — was one-sided, intended to stress the innocuous, literary content of

Olga Rudge spent the last two decades alone, sorting through Pound's papers, and helping with genuine research inquiries. Finally she lived with her daughter — by whom she is survived, and who through marriage had become Princess Mary de Rachewitz — at her daughter's castle near Merano in northern Italy.

## PERSONAL COLUMN

[illegible]



## NEWS

## Humans can get mad cow disease

■ The Government admitted for the first time that mad cow disease could be transmitted to humans.

And as ministers demanded expert guidance by the weekend on whether children can safely eat beef, its chief adviser gave a warning that a newly discovered strain of the human form of the disease could even develop into an epidemic. Page 1, 2, 3

## Howard cracks down on burglars

■ Persistent burglars face a minimum of three years in prison and repeat drug dealers at least six years under tough sentencing plans being proposed by Michael Howard. The Home Secretary will also end the practice by which the length of time a prisoner spends on remand is automatically included as part of a jail sentence, giving the judiciary discretion in the matter. Page 1

## Wedding lines

The platform announcement came fifty years too late for the couple from *Brief Encounter*, but a British railway station plans to conduct weddings. Page 1

## INLA infighting

Leading members of the Irish National Liberation Army in Belfast have gone to ground as the terrorist organisation tears itself apart in a feud that has claimed three lives this year. Page 4

## Whitehall cuts

Civil Service staff cuts were blamed by the parliamentary ombudsman for a record number of complaints against government departments. Page 4

## Briton murdered

A British businessman, David Swindells, has been murdered by thieves in Shenzhen, the increasingly lawless Chinese city on the border with Hong Kong. Page 5

## Teachers' grades

Poor performance in two lessons will be enough to classify teachers as incompetent under inspection guidelines to help to rid schools of 15,000 bad staff. Page 6

## Landlord crackdown

Landlords should be forced by law to keep rented properties fit for human habitation, according to the Law Commission. More than a fifth of private rented accommodation in England is not fit to live in. Page 10

## Brothers in Charltons' boots

■ A great English football tradition was revived by Terry Venables, the England coach, when he named Gary and Philip Neville, the Manchester United defenders, in his squad. If they play against Bulgaria in next Wednesday's friendly, they will be the twentieth pair of brothers to win England caps — and the first to do so since Bobby and Jack Charlton. Page 1

## Landed by Disney

Two little-known British animators whose sole original work is a 90-second film have signed a multimillion-pound feature film deal with Disney. Page 13

## Taiwan gets US arms

America, in a further reminder to the Chinese of its military influence, agreed to sell mobile Stinger anti-aircraft missiles and other defensive weapons to Taiwan. Page 14

## Threat to coalition

If the vote for Germany's Free Democrats collapses this Sunday, the Bonn coalition with the Christian Democrats will be in serious trouble. Page 15

## TB 'to kill millions'

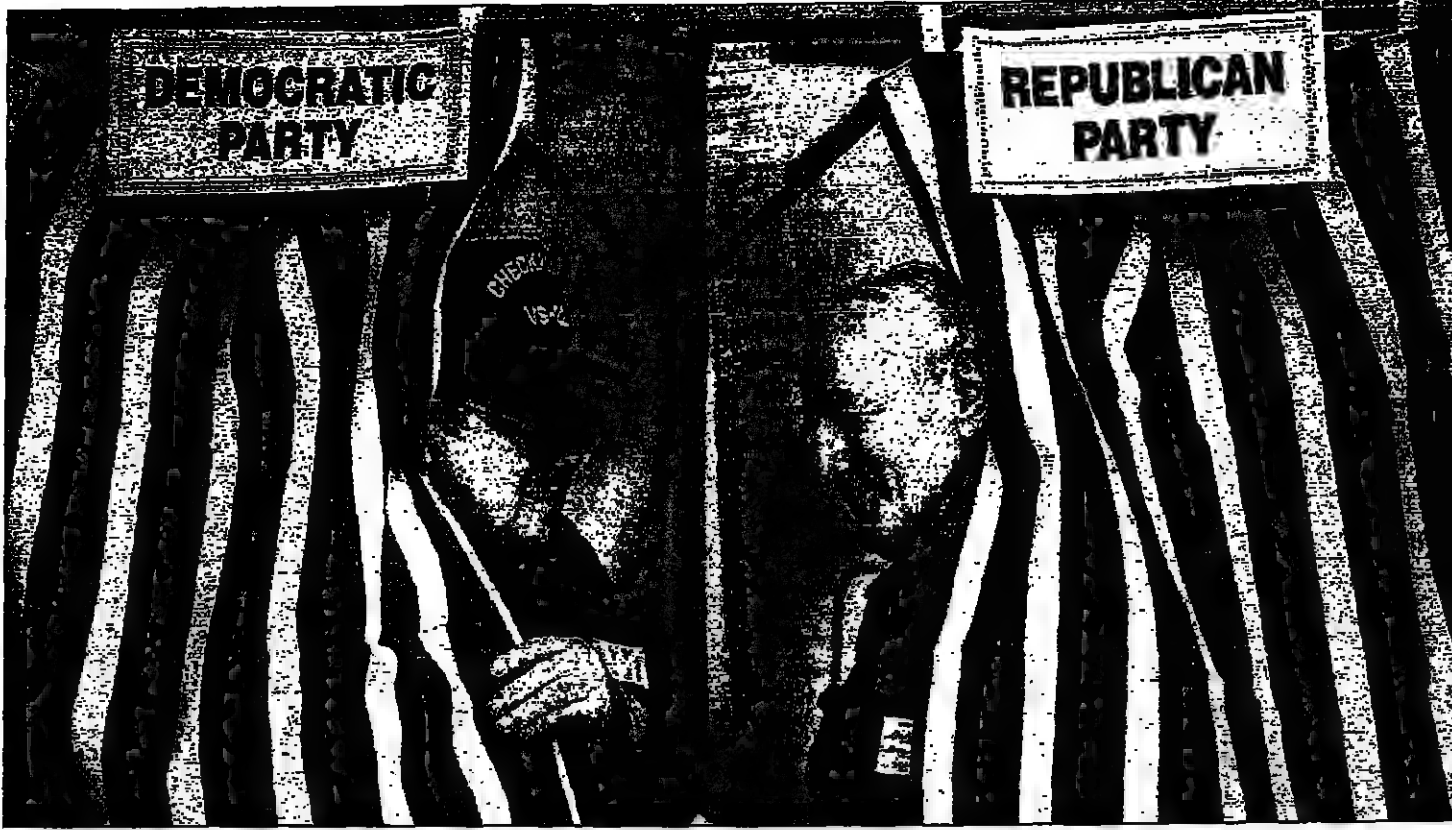
A drug-resistant form of tuberculosis is poised to kill tens of millions of people, says the World Health Organisation. Page 16

## Victim tapes death

An American woman abducted at gunpoint switched on a tape recorder in her handbag and recorded the last minutes of her life, providing police with a record of the gunman's voice and personal details. Page 16

## Mandela challenge

Winnie Mandela said she would challenge a court order granting President Mandela a divorce, hours after he offered a her an out-of-court financial settlement. Page 17



Political rivals exchange views after casting their votes in Huntley, northwest of Chicago, during the Illinois Primary. Page 16

## BUSINESS

**British Telecom:** New proposals from Ofel, the telecommunications regulator, will ensure that BT customers will see their phone bills fall in real terms. Page 25

**Polly Peck:** The jury in the trial of Elizabeth Forsyth retired to consider their verdicts. She denies handling nearly £400,000 allegedly stolen by Asil Nadir from Polly Peck International. Page 25

**Economy:** Retail sales increased by 0.6 per cent in February, reversing January's fall, according to the Central Statistical Office. Page 25

**Markets:** The FT-SE 100 index fell 7.5 to 3,685.4. Sterling's trade-weighted index climbed from 83.7 to 84.0 after a rise from \$1.5323 to \$1.5363 and from DM2.2620 to DM2.2596. Page 28

## SPORT

**Football:** England have turned to youth for the match against Bulgaria at Wembley next week, selecting Robbie Fowler, 20, and the Neville brothers, Gary, 21, and Philip, 19. Pages 45, 48

**Rugby league:** Two days before the Australian Rugby League premiership kicks off, hopes rose for a ceasefire in the acrimonious battle with Super League. Page 45

**Athletics:** After shutting herself away for 18 months, Diane Modahl is not only talking to the world, she is thinking of competing against it again. Page 42

**Golf:** David Feherty has overcome a long series of problems on and off the course to make a welcome return to form on the PGA European Tour. Page 46

## ARTS

**New Films:** *Toy Story*'s stars may come from a computer but the emotions are definitely human, says Geoff Brown of the week's top cinema release. While Vietnam's urban nightmare is pretentiously treated in *Cyelo*. Page 35

**Young at Art:** How a top London youth orchestra — Ealing Youth Orchestra — is putting on Puccini's *Tosca*. Page 36

**Trouble in Wales:** The high-voltage imagination of the Welsh dramatist Edward Thomas is on display in his play, *Song from a Forgotten City*, now on at the Donmar Warehouse in London. Page 37

**Moving home:** English National Ballet has a deal with the Coliseum that will see the theatre become its London home. Page 37

## REVIEWS

**Dishing the dirt:** Eleanor Lambert, New York's grand dame of "best dressed" lists, is in danger of being knocked off her perch. Page 19

**Dr Thomas Stuttaford** on ever-better pacemakers, wine versus salmonella, steroids' effects. Page 18

**Little trestles:** Two books aim to tell children and parents how babies are born — when they are conceived through the test-tube method. Page 18

## BOOKS

**Revealing stories:** Joanna Pitman on Japan's imperial love, an Inferno for our times; Peter Ackroyd on Cromwell, protector enthroned in ermine; and others. Pages 38, 39

## TRAVEL

**Catching a cold:** A bad winter and competition from Eurotunnel have given cross-channel ferry operators a pasting. Now Eurostar plans a new range of services. Page 41

**Floating magic:** Disney launches its own cruise liners within two years. Page 41

## THE PAPERS

In making immigration an issue for the forthcoming elections in Germany, Oskar Lafontaine is risking an own goal. Every time immigration has become an electoral issue in Europe it has been the Right which has gained the greatest advance. — *La Repubblica*

## IN THE TIMES

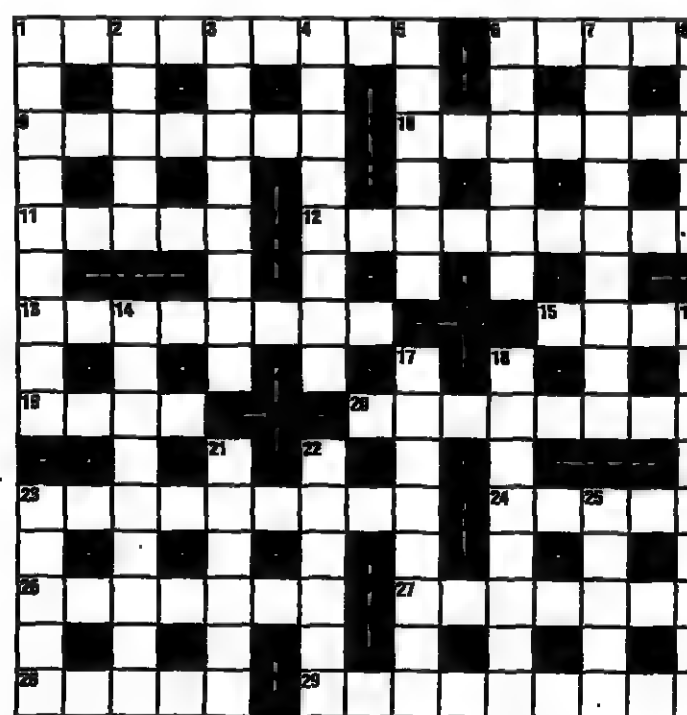
■ **STRAITS MAN**  
On the pop page: David Sinclair on *Golden Heart*, the first solo album by Mark Knopfler, left

## EDUCATION

The National Union of Students as a nursery for new Labour



## THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,121



- ACROSS**
- The best foundation for a plot (6-5).
  - What witch may use to live — like this magic, primarily (5).
  - Decide to keep ring in gold coin holder (7).
  - Warning cry's very short always (7).
  - Question about Egyptian grain (5).
  - What could make me read on, absorbing 100? (9).
  - This may clarify what's crude about flashy clothes (8).
  - Indication of engaged status? Yes and no (4).
  - Type that's abandoned Sally (4).
  - Someone held a net I cast in river (8).
  - Comfort, perhaps, for Alcatraz inmate in dismal prison sentence (9).
  - Power line carried by that support structure? (5).
- DOWN**
- Government department alters text in introductions (9).
  - Potential seed beginning one very unusual learning experience (5).
  - Flat ring provided for performing with horses (8).
  - Long shot certain to go over a railway (8).
  - It's a mistake to change sides (6).
  - Ship — British one needing specialist engineers (6).
  - Evidence about accomplished English ruler (9).
  - There has to be an R in the month, stupid! (5).
  - Definite last word on closure of pit? Heaven! (9).
  - Vendian upland turned over to provide space for the rest of the players (5,4).
  - Ambassador wrong to imprison monk for a week (6).
  - Short publication shows limit restricting speed at junction (8).
  - You'll see ball-game in covering winter sports venue (3-3).
  - Replacement locks put on Western American lodge (6).
  - Consecrate bishop? Not so! (5).
  - Drunk, having taken on nearly two pints (5).

**Solution to Puzzle No 20,120**

SALEM PEASOUPER  
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P A N C Y F R E E T H O R N  
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G E N E R A L P R A C T I C E  
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S V L E S K S  
T I T L E D E E D T R E S S

Times Two Crossword, page 48

## TIMES WEATHERCAST

For the latest region by region forecast, 24 hours a day, dial 0991 900 followed by the appropriate code.

Greater London	701
Kent/Surrey/Sussex	702
Devon & Cornwall	703
Wilt/Dorset/West/Som	704
Wilt/Dorset/West/Som	705
Bedfordshire	706
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Weathercast is charged at 30p per minute (cheap rate) and 40p per minute at all other times.

## AA ROADWATCH

For the latest AA traffic/roadworks information, 24 hours a day, dial 035 401 followed by the appropriate code.

London & SE traffic, Manchester

Area within M25

East/Herts/Bedfordshire/Bucks/Ox

Kent/Surrey/Sussex/Hants

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## FORECAST

General: cloudy across England and Wales with a band of light rain and drizzle slowly moving north. This may fall as sleet or snow on the high ground in the north but only in small amounts. Southern areas will see some brightness but have showery bursts of rain.

Sleet and snow in central and northern Scotland will become confined to the far north by the evening. Southern Scotland and Northern Ireland should have a mainly dry day with some brightness, although patchy rain or drizzle will arrive later.

London, SE England, Central S England, Channel Isles, SW England: some brightness at times but mainly cloudy with showery bursts of rain. Wind light to moderate, south to southwest. Max 10C (50F).

E Anglia, E Midlands, E England, W Midlands, S Wales, NW England, Central N England: cloudy with light rain or drizzle, turning patchy. Wind light to moderate, easterly becoming mainly

south to southeast. Max 8C (46F). Lake District, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, NW Scotland, N Ireland: dry for much of the day but cloud thickening later with some patchy rain or drizzle in places. Wind east to northeast, moderate, locally fresh. Max 6C (43F).

NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee: dry for much of the day but cloud thickening with light rain or drizzle later. Wind east to northeast, moderate. Max 5C (41F).

Aberdeen, Central Highlands, Moray Firth: cloudy with patchy drizzle, sleet or snow on hills. Slowly becoming drier from the south, but staying mostly cloudy. Wind east to northeast, moderate. Max 5C (41F).

NE Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: mostly cloudy with outbreaks of drizzle, sleet or snow. Wind east to northeast, moderate to fresh. Max 5C (41C).

Outlook for tomorrow and Sunday: patchy rain in the north, rain spreading from the southwest later.

## AROUND BRITAIN

44 hrs to 5 pm: b=light c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=drizzle; du=dust; f=fog; g=gale; h=hail; i=ice; s=snow; sh=showers; st=sleet; sw=sun; t=thunder

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## TODAY

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ANATOLE KALETSKY 29

Why US capitalism has defeated the 'peasants' revolt



TRAVEL 40, 41

Island on course for the sporting tourist



SPORT 42-48

Modahl ready to leave her troubles behind

CROMWELL THE PUZZLING PURITAN Books 38, 39

# THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY MARCH 21 1996

## New price cap will see BT bills fall by £20

By ERIC REGULY

BT customers will see their phone bills fall from an average of £50 a quarter to about £30 over the next five years under new price-cap proposals published yesterday by Ofel, the telecommunications regulator.

BT said that it was "disappointed" by the proposed controls because they are tighter than it had expected. If BT rejects them, Ofel will automatically seek a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry. With BT and Ofel already at loggerheads over other issues, such as policing anti-competitive practices, a monopolies referral now seems all but certain.

BT shares fell 7p to 344.5p as investors weighed up the prospect of continued tight controls. Ofel said the new price regime would remove some £1.5 billion a year in "super-normal" operating profits from the company's regulated business.

Don Cruickshank, Ofel's Director-General, proposed that BT's retail prices decline by between 5

per cent and 9 per cent, less the inflation rate, between mid-1997, when the current cap expires, and 2001. The proposals are essentially unchanged from the current cap of 7½ per cent less the inflation rate.

He also proposed the introduction of a wholesale, or "network", price cap, which would reduce prices such as interconnection charges by 3 to 6 per cent a year. The cable-telephony companies applauded the proposal because all their calls have to pass through BT's network.

Retail price caps have been in place since BT was privatised in 1984 and have shaved billions of pounds off the country's phone bills. BT's prices for national and international calls are now among the lowest in the world, although local call prices are nowhere near the cheapest.

Mr Cruickshank said that the price cap could not be eliminated, as BT wished, because BT is still the dominant player in the market. It controls an estimated 94 per cent of local calls, 83 per cent of national calls and 70 per cent of international calls. He said: "The central objectives for the price control review are to protect customers in markets where competition is not yet effective."

"Effective competition is around the corner, but it isn't here yet."

BT disagreed, noting that has some 150 competitors, ranging from Mercury Communications to the cable-telephony companies, which are taking about 50,000 residential customers a month from BT. John Butler, the company's director of regulatory affairs, said: "We expect prices to fall whatever happens because of the intensity of the competition."

Mercury, owned 80 per cent by Cable and Wireless, generally supported BT's view. Mercury has argued that many of BT's competitors have had trouble gaining market share because they cannot afford to match the Ofel-imposed price cuts at BT. Peter Howell-Davies, Mercury's chief executive, said that he does not believe that "continuing with the current, broadly based price capping system, will foster effective competition. Instead it will involve Ofel in continued market management".

Mr Cruickshank said, however, that Ofel eventually wants to stop being a day-to-day regulator and become a competition watchdog. The precise price figure will be determined in consultation with BT and will depend on a range of complex factors, such as BT's cost of capital, its ability to make efficiency gains, the expected growth in the overall telecoms market and estimates of BT's future share of it. Ofel and BT may even decide to shorten the new price cap to two years and exempt certain services. Ofel said it wants to determine the new price cap's level by the end of May.

BT also announced a £100 million upgrade of its chargecard service, involving the dispatch of some 6 million new cards.



Danny Jennings, head of BT's card services, with the new chargecards

## Jury begins deliberations in trial of Nadir aide

By JON ASHWORTH

THE JURY in the trial of Elizabeth Forsyth retired to consider its verdict yesterday, five weeks after the case opened at an Old Bailey annexe in central London. Mrs Forsyth, 59, of Great Dunmow, Essex, denies handling nearly £400,000 in funds during a visit to Switzerland in October 1989.

The money was allegedly stolen from Polly Peck International (PPI) by Asil Nadir, who employed Mrs Forsyth to advise on private interests ranging from racehorses to newspapers. The jury of seven women and five men must first decide whether Mr Nadir stole the money. If he did, it must then decide whether Mrs Forsyth knew she was handling stolen goods.

Mr Justice Tucker, concluding his summing up, told the jury they had to consider a series of questions about a transaction which had seen £400,000 pass from London to Geneva, be turned into cash, and return, in part, in a briefcase. Why, in the words of the prosecution, had this "convoluted, six-stage, highly expensive" route been selected to pay two bills in the UK? The judge told the jury: "You may think that highly relevant."

What, the judge continued, did Mrs Forsyth think was going on when she was asked to collect a sum of money from SG Warburg Soditic in Geneva? Was it correct that she had failed to spot the name PPI on a receipt for the money, and if she did see it, why did she make no inquiries about it? Was this a "Middle Eastern" way of doing business, or was it simply dishonest?

Earlier, the judge reminded the jury of a series of police interviews in which Mrs Forsyth was challenged about her

actions. She said she had been asked to withdraw the money by Jason Davies, a former stockbroker working for Mr Nadir in Switzerland, and had no reason to suspect it might be stolen. She had been given a very good reason for the transaction at the time, but could not recall what it was.

Mrs Forsyth met the "workaholic" Mr Nadir when advising "very rich people" at Citibank, and was recruited to help to sort out his tax affairs.

In October 1989, she was ordered to Geneva to "hold the hand" of bankers who might consider selling PPI shares held as collateral against personal loans. While there, she received a call from Mr Davies, who told her arrangements had been made for her to "pick up some cash". He told her it was an urgent payment that had to go to Midland Bank in London.

The next day £310,000 was paid into an account at Handelsbank, and the balance, less £3,000 commission, was forwarded to London. Mrs Forsyth flew back to London with £88,050 in a briefcase, which she handed to Mr Nadir's chauffeur at the airport.

Entries in ledgers in northern Cyprus suggested the sum of £400,000 had been credited to the accounts of Unipac, a PPI subsidiary. The judge reminded the jury that originals of the documents had not been produced, and there was no one to testify that the money had been deposited locally in Turkish lira, as claimed. Expert witnesses had inspected the documents and found no evidence of forgery.

The jury was allowed home for the night after retiring for 2½ hours, and resumes its deliberations this morning.

### BUSINESS TODAY

#### STOCK MARKET INDICES

FT-SE 100	3092.4	(-7.8)
Yield	3.83%	
FT-SE All share	1833.48	(-1.90)
Nikkei	Closed	
Dow Jones	5635.91	(-33.60)*
S&P Composite	647.78	(-3.91)*

#### US RATE

Federal Funds	5½%	(5½%)
Long Bond	91½%	(90½%)
Yield	6.68%	(6.71%)

#### LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	6½%	(6½%)
Life long bill	108½%	(104½%)

#### STERLING

New York	1.5379*	(1.5338)
London	1.5381	(1.5328)
DM	2.2665	(2.2608)
FF	7.7885	(7.7275)
Sfr	1.8311	(1.8282)
Yen	163.57	(162.84)
2 index	84.0	(83.7)

#### US \$ \$ \$ \$ \$

London	1.4732*	(1.4735)
FF	5.0470*	(5.0375)
Sfr	1.1910*	(1.1902)
Yen	106.44*	(105.16)
2 index	85.7	(85.6)

#### Tokyo close Yen unit

London	158.10	(157.75)
Brent 16-day (Jun)	918.10	(917.75)

#### SOIL

London close	6384.75	(6386.55)
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\* denotes midday trading price

### Flotation

Harrisons & Crosfield, the chemicals, timber and foods company, accompanied a 20 per cent fall in full-year profits with plans to raise £30 million by floating off its remaining plantation interests on the Sydney Stock Exchange. Page 27, *Tempest* 28

### Uncertain

Bernard Matthews, the poultry and meat processing group, sees an uncertain outlook in the first half of 1996 after raising prices for the first time in years to counter the impact of sharply higher raw material costs. Page 30

### Pledge by Labour on late payment

By PHILIP BASSETT  
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

TONY BLAIR, proclaiming new Labour as the "party of small business", said yesterday a future Labour government will legislate on late payment of debt.

His promise, which came as Brussels agreed a new package of measures to help small firms across Europe, prompted the UK Government to announce it is to consult small firms on a statutory requirement on companies to disclose their performance on late payment.

Mr Blair's commitment to small firms, unveiled at an Industry Forum in London as part of Labour's document *The Growth Agenda*, is a key part of measures aimed at helping small companies.

These measures would include a statutory right to interest on late payment, a requirement on companies to publish their payment practices, and a commitment by the Government and public agencies to pay their bills within 30 days.

Mr Blair's move prompted the Government to bring forward its own announcement. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said that the Government will now consult on the idea that companies should detail in their annual reports their late payment performance and policies. If necessary, the Government would then legislate on the issue.

Labour hailed, page 26  
Pennington, page 27

## High street sales reverse fall

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH retail sales increased by 0.6 per cent in February, exactly reversing the fall recorded in January, according to the Central Statistical Office.

Figures for activity on the high street have been particularly erratic in recent months but, overall, City economists concluded that sales are on a modest upward trend. The annual rate of increase fell to 1.9 per cent from 2.2 per cent in January, but this was because of a particularly strong trading performance in February last year.

Simon Briscoe, of Nikko Europe, said sales were not yet strong enough to prevent another base rate cut, but that the Chancellor's forecast of 3.5 per cent consumer demand growth this year looks increasingly plausible.

The modestly improving consumer picture was backed by a survey yesterday for the European Commission which showed that consumer confidence edged slightly higher in March. There was also news of a 2 per cent rise in car production in February, after a 3 per cent increase in January. In the past three months, car output was 5.5 per cent higher than the previous three, a bounce which appeared to reflect output for export, rather than the domestic market. However, production was still flat on a year ago.

The retail sales figures appeared to give mixed messages on the outlook for prices, published by the CSO today. The most buoyant areas appear to be those where price rises have been most modest, suggesting that consumers continue to be highly price sensitive. But there was some concern yesterday about a rise in the retail sales deflator, which has proved a good

pointer to retail prices trends. The minutes of the February 7 monetary meeting showed the Chancellor and Governor of the Bank of England in agreement on keeping rates unchanged. The next month they agreed on a ¼-point cut. The Governor expressed some worries about M4 money supply and wages. The Chancellor appeared to be fairly relaxed about both.

## Tentative housing recovery

THE tentative nature of the housing recovery and cut-throat competition for new mortgage business was underlined yesterday when building societies reported a £157 million monthly fall in net home loan advances to £603 million (Robert Miller writes).

However, leading UK banks announced mortgage lending increased in February to £631 million (£578 million in Janu-

ary). The Building Societies Association, which also announced a £113 million inflow of savers' funds (£272 million outflow in January), said that capital repayments on mortgages "persisted at higher than normal levels" and explained most of the net lending fall.

Peter Williams, BSA head of research, said there had probably been a shift in

market share between banks and building societies. Indicators, overall suggested a modest housing recovery is under way.

□ The Bank of England said February M4 money supply grew 0.4 per cent but its annual rate of growth fell to 9.9 per cent from 10.3 per cent in January. However, the figures appeared to show a stronger trend in bank loans.

## SE fails to avert inquiry threat

By ROBERT MILLER



Kemp-Welch: pressed

EVIDENCE given by the Stock Exchange's senior executives to the Commons Treasury Select committee yesterday failed to lift the threat of a further investigation by the OFT into allegations that Exchange policy is dominated by a handful of the largest members and is therefore anti-competitive.

The Stock Exchange delegation, headed by John Kemp-Welch, chairman, told MPs who are investigating the future of the London Stock Exchange, that at a board meeting later today the Exchange's directors would be urged to vote in favour of scrapping the present order driven system of buying and selling shares. It would be

replaced by an electronic order matching service to eliminate the spread between buy and sell prices.

Sir Tom Arnold, chairman of the committee said last night: "We will wait to see the precise details of what the Stock Exchange proposes. We have already received a written submission from the OFT and in the light of what the Exchange announces we will ask the OFT to report swiftly on its views of the new system. Depending on what the OFT says we may ask the director of Fair Trading to give evidence to us in person. There are many questions still unanswered."

The committee pressed Mr Kemp-Welch repeatedly on circumstances surrounding the January sacking of Michael Lawrence, the Exchange's former chief executive. In his evidence to MPs last month Mr Lawrence said he was certain he would have kept his job if Mr Kemp-Welch had backed him. Mr Kemp-Welch said yesterday that this was "a doubtful proposition".

The Stock Exchange delegation repeatedly denied Mr Lawrence's allegations that opposition to his reforms by BZW, Merrill Lynch and SBC Warburg led to his sacking.

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## Britannic to cover critical illness

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

**BRITANNIC** Assurance, which stopped selling motor policies in January because of crippling competition from direct writers, is to launch its first critical illness product.

Brian Shaw, general manager and actuary, said the policies would be marketed to new customers and to the 940,000 households countrywide already on its books, and would be aimed at the "upper end" of its client list. Other insurers are looking at healthcare and illness products amid falling life and pensions sales.

Britannic sells insurance door-to-door and does not have a direct telephone operation, although after a review of operations the company is to increase its investment in new technology and has not ruled out job cuts.

The shares fell 3p to 779p yesterday after the company was unable to indicate whether the Department of Trade and Industry will allow it to reallocate orphan assets to shareholders. Analysts estimate these assets range between £700 million and £1.4 billion.

Unveiling operating profit before tax of £50.6 million for the year to 1995, up 7.1 per cent on the 1994 restated figure of £47.3 million. Mr Shaw said that new life and pensions business written in 1995 was lower than in the previous year.

However, there was an improving trend in the second half of 1995, which continued into 1996. Total life and pensions premiums for the year fell by 4.6 per cent to £361.5 million.

Britannic, which had 26,000 motor policies when it decided to stop writing new business, will continue to cover policyholders until renewal.

Earnings per share rose to 25.17p (1994: 10.34p) and the proposed final dividend is 10.8p per share net, giving a total for the year of 15.4p, a rise of 10 per cent.



Dennis Webb, right, with Andrew Calvert, Beazer financial director, is cautiously optimistic despite a fall in profits

## Beazer looks to upturn in second half

**BEAZER HOMES** yesterday predicted an improvement in its fortunes in the second half of the year after unveiling half-year profits down by nearly a quarter at £18.5 million (Alasdair Murray writes).

Shares in the company rose 2p to 175p, although Beazer gave warning that the recovery would be insufficient to restore full-year profits to the levels of last year.

Dennis Webb, chief executive, said: "With the favourable mortgage market and declining unemployment we believe that a cautious upturn in the market will continue."

"Our policy of defending margins last year was successful and we are in a strong position to benefit from the revival."

Turnover fell 23 per cent to £158 million. The interim net dividend of 2p (0.95p) is payable on April 29.

## Blair hails Labour as the party for small business

By PHILIP BASSETT  
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

**LABOUR** yesterday declared itself to be the "party for small business" as it set out a new package of proposals aimed at giving assistance to small firms by a Labour government.

In addition to the declaration by Tony Blair, the Labour leader, of his party's intention to legislate on late payment of debt, senior Labour figures set out a series of measures aimed at the small business sector.

Andrew Smith, the Shadow Treasury Chief Secretary, said Labour's commitment to working with small firms now marked out "new Labour as the party of small business".

He told a conference on small business: "Small firms will benefit especially from Labour's determination to secure sustainable expansion with a medium-term growth strategy, aimed at raising the trend rate of growth with low inflation."

At a conference organised by the Industry Forum, the body set up by Labour to

provide links between Labour and business, Mr Smith said Labour would act to close the investment gap, modernising and simplifying the tax system, tackling tax abuse and taking steps to encourage long-term investment and its availability to small business. The Forum published yesterday a policy document that sets out Labour's proposals on small business.

He said that every economic and fiscal proposal brought forward by Labour "will be examined for what it can do to

nurture small business success".

Labour unveiled a pilot site on the Internet, called the Enterprise Zone, aimed at providing easy access for small business to a range of information — an idea mentioned by ministers last week at their own small business conference as an objective.

Clear interest in Labour's plans for small business was indicated by the wealth of businesses, industry organisations and others speaking at yesterday's conference.

Stan Mendham, chief executive of the Forum of Private Business, said that the conference showed clearly that Labour had "come a long way" in its relationship with business and small firms in particular.

He said that if Labour wanted to be the party of small business, "they will have to measure accurately what we need, and then they will have to meet those needs. If they don't, the economy will not grow."

Ron Taylor, director-general of the British Chambers of Commerce, urged Labour to build on present policy: "We are looking for stability and consistency in government policy-making so we can plan forward with confidence."

Stephen Alaburtt, from the Federation of Small Business, said that large firms were still cutting jobs, whereas small firms could repeat their 2.5 million job growth over the past 20 years. Mr Blair will address the federation's annual conference next week.

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## Brussels plan to boost small firms

**BRUSSELS** announced a new programme of help for small businesses across Europe yesterday in a renewed attempt to promote economic and employment growth (Philip Bassett writes).

European Commissioners meeting in Brussels agreed a new, four-year, 180 million Ecu package of measures,

aimed at improving the competitiveness and impact of small firms. The package, called the third multi-annual programme for SMEs, reflects a greater realisation in Brussels of the importance of the small firms sector, and is part of the European Confidence Pact on Employment being proposed by Jacques Santer,

President of the Commission, to promote job growth.

Christos Papoutsis, the EU commissioner who has responsibility for enterprise policy, said yesterday that the SME sector accounted for 99 per cent of all European firms, covering two thirds of total employment and 65 per cent of all EU business turnover.

The new programme, which will now go before the EU's council of industry ministers, focuses on encouraging an economic environment favourable to small firms, improving small firms' competitiveness in the single market, and improving consultation and policy development with small firms.

## Mixed jobs fortune for Scotland

**MIXED** fortunes are in prospect for the jobs in Scotland, says the Scottish Economic Bulletin, published by The Scottish Office.

Although the jobs total will continue to fall, it is expected that Scotland will suffer a higher average unemployment rate than that of UK as a whole.

But Scottish exports will remain healthy and growth will outstrip that of the UK as a whole next year. The bulletin, an official review of the Scottish economy, states that, last October, one-third of all claimants unemployed north of the border were out of work for over a year.

A further third had been out of work from three to 12 months and the final third for less than three months. Of all the regions in the UK, Scotland has the third lowest incidence of long term unemployment (over two years). Only East Anglia and the South West were lower.

The bulletin says that Scottish manufactured exports grew more than twice as quickly as those of the UK as a whole in 1994. Further growth was estimated last year taking their value to over £16 billion.

## Valentine's celebration for Clinton

By SARAH BAGNALL

**DON LEWIN**, chairman of Clinton Cards, said the greetings card retailer had had its best ever Valentine's Day and Mother's Day.

The occasions are the two most important in the retailer's calendar, after Christmas. "Sales were particularly good. They were the best we have had," said Mr Lewin.

He made his remarks as he revealed a 23 per cent leap in pre-tax profit from £2.6 million to £3.2 million on sales ahead 30 per cent at £109.8 million in the year to January 28. Like-for-like sales rose 4.7 per cent, excluding the Hall of Cards stores acquired in 1994.

During the year the company acquired 112 stores from Carlton Cards, helping to lift the total number of shops from 362 to 480.

Mr Lewin said the acquired stores contributed to profits, but margins suffered because of the discounting of acquired lines of stock that the group does not want to trade.

The final dividend of 3.35p makes a total for the year of 5.1p, up 8.3 per cent. Due on May 28, it is being paid out of earnings per share of 10.23p, up 17.8 per cent.

## BUSINESS RECOVERY

## Lloyd's rescue needs '£4.8bn to succeed'

A GROUP indirectly representing 20,000 members in Lloyd's of London said the troubled insurance market's Reconstruction and Renewal plan needs more financing. Alan Porter, deputy chairman of the Lloyd's Names Association Working Party, said its view was that half of the losses of £11 billion-£12 billion in the market have resulted from negligence, fraud and regulatory failure. Mr Porter, speaking at a conference organised by the Association of Lloyd's Names, said the rescue plan needed £4.8 billion to succeed, rather than the £2.8 billion now being offered.

Mr Porter said the scheme's litigation pool of £800 million is too small to settle all the lawsuits from different groups of names and provides an inadequate return for those who have already obtained court judgments. At least £1 billion, and preferably £1.2 billion, is needed to create an offer worth serious consideration. Mr Porter believes names should not be asked to come up with more money than they already have in Lloyd's.

## Swedes size-up Fokker

**SAAB** and **FFV Aerotech**, the Swedish aircraft and defence firms each said yesterday that they are considering buying parts of Fokker, the failed Dutch aircraft maker. Anders Annerfalk, a Saab Aircraft spokesman, said: "We have visited Fokker and made an unbiased study to see if there are operations that we would be interested in acquiring or if there are possibilities for cooperation." FFV Aerotech, a subsidiary of Celsius AB, may be interested in Fokker's Product Support activities, the company said. But neither company has begun formal negotiations or made formal proposals.

## Centre jobs hope

A PROJECT to spend £31 million on conference facilities could create up to 1,000 new jobs in Scotland. New facilities at Glasgow's Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre will cater for up to 3,000 delegates. Michael Forsyth, Scottish Secretary of State, said they will place Scotland at the heart of the international conference circuit. "With facilities for up to 3,000 delegates, it will offer a unique opportunity for Scotland to improve substantially its share of the international conference market." The new centre will have two auditoriums, a business centre, committee rooms, stages and accommodation.

## Digital warning

**DIGITAL EQUIPMENT** is the latest victim of sluggish sales of personal computers, warning investors that it expects its current quarterly earnings to fall well below Wall Street expectations. The company said it expected revenues from sales of personal computers in its third quarter to be lower than expected and its earnings are likely to be below the current range of analysts' estimates for the quarter. Digital said, however, that the results are expected to reflect continued profit improvement year-over-year.

## Telspec advances

**TELSPEC**, the electronic equipment company, lifted pre-tax profits by 33 per cent to £8.72 million in the year to December 31. In spite of incurring a number of unforeseen problems which wiped £1.5 million off full-year profits. The company said that the cost of integrating its newly acquired Scottish plant with an existing factory in Rochester proved to be greater than expected. Turnover advanced 62 per cent to £58.8 million. A final dividend of 3.6p (2.4p), payable on May 20, gives 5.4p (3.7p) for the year, from earnings ahead 24 per cent to 17.9p (14.4p) a share.

## Mediators stand by

**FEDERAL** mediators are on standby to help General Motors and union negotiators who have been unable to end a two-week-old strike that has left 175,000 workers idle. The strike began on March 5 at two plants in Dayton, Ohio, by about 3,000 employees of Delphi Chassis, a GM supplier of brake parts. The dispute was started by union fears that GM would start to provide more brake production business to outside companies. The stoppage has now shut down 26 of GM's 29 North American vehicle assembly plants.

## SiR plans to join AIM

**SYSTEMS INTEGRATED RESEARCH (SiR)**, which designs, produces and supplies multi-media educational software, plans to join the Alternative Investment Market next week. A placing by Durlacher of up to 3.7 million shares, at 115p each, is expected to raise about £3 million for the company, capitalising it at about £15.4 million. SiR expects to make a small profit in the current year to May and hopes to make a pre-tax profit of about £500,000 in the following year to May 1997, an turnover of £3.5 million.

## OGC achieves 10% rise

**OGC INTERNATIONAL**, the oil and gas industry construction company, achieved a 10 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £14.2 million last year despite a 14 per cent decline in turnover to £232.9 million. Earnings increased to 14.79p a share from 13.55p and the total dividend rises to 6.3p a share from 5.75p, with a 4.3p final. The Aberdeen group completed a redevelopment of Shell's Brent B platform and BHP's Point of Ayr gas processing terminal in North Wales in 1995. Richard Wilson, chairman, said the group expected to see further progress this year.

## Jupiter bonuses study

**INVESTIGATORS** from Imro, the watchdog for fund managers, were yesterday still studying allegations that Jupiter Tyndall, the fund management group bought by the German Commerzbank last year for £169 million, had breached City rules relating to staff bonus payments and the handling of client assets. Jupiter Tyndall, which has £4 billion under management in a mixture of unit and investment trusts as well as pension funds, denies any wrong doing.

## Store considers response to takeover bid

## Panther pounces on Elys

By MARTIN BARROW

ONE of the sleeper corners of the Stock Exchange was rudely awakened by a takeover bid yesterday.

Elys (Wimbledon), the department store, was last night considering its response to a near-£7 million bid by Panther Securities, the investment vehicle of Andrew Perloff, the entrepreneur.

Elys has remained largely unchanged as a one-store business for a generation, despite operating two Bods for Less discount stores in Surrey. Shareholders have seen their shares significantly underperform the stock market for as long as anyone cares

to remember. Panther Securities emerged as a potential predator when it acquired a 29.9 per cent interest formerly held by Boots the Chemist in May. It proposes to appoint to the Elys board Manny Silverman, the former apprentice tailor who rose to become chief executive of Moss Bros Group for seven years until 1987.

The structure of the Panther offer is highly unusual and required the approval of the Takeover Panel before being submitted to shareholders.

There is a two-tier cash offer, consisting of 750p a share in cash for up to one out

of every three Elys shares, and of 485p in cash for all or any part of the balance of Elys shares held. Elys' rarely-traded shares were unchanged at 550p yesterday. Panther hopes to retain Elys' stock market listing.

Elys directors refused to comment on the offer last night. Their record was strongly attacked by Panther, which claims dividends have barely risen since 1991 and have fallen in real terms, while sales per sq ft are below those of other department stores. Elys profits, which were £1.11 million before tax in 1991, were £409,000 last year.

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Denmark Dkr	0.752
Finland Mk	9.25
France Fr	7.81
Germany Dm	8.14
Greece Dr	2.42
Hong Kong \$	2.21
Italy Lit	365.00
Japan Yen	11.50
Norway Kr	4.800
Portugal Esc	203.00
Spain Ptas	166.00
Sweden Kr	0.537
Switzerland Fr	2.454
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Regulator rings changes at telecoms giant □ Small business is a big issue □ The acceptable face of accounting

## Wrong number for BT

THE end is nigh for the BT we know — and thanks to the advertisements — love, Don Cruickshank, the telecommunications regulator, has virtually obliged BT to buy Cable and Wireless or split itself, British Gas-style, into a network company and a services company. It cannot continue unchanged and making £3 billion a year because Mr Cruickshank has made it clear that it will get few breaks on the regulatory front before the next century.

Sooner or later, BT should come to the conclusion that it is the quarry of a single-minded hunter with time to spare. To survive, and to serve its shareholders conscientiously, it must reduce the importance of its network or get rid of it entirely.

BT's sin is that it still dominates every sector of the telecoms market a dozen years after it theoretically lost its monopoly. As a result, Mr Cruickshank has proposed an extension of the price cap. This ensures currently that prices to customers fall by 7½ per cent a year in real terms. This will be renewed in mid-1997 at a figure somewhere between RPI-5 per cent to RPI-9 per cent. No change, in other words, though a few services and market segments may qualify for an exemption on the basis that enough competition has developed in those areas to ensure that prices will not rise.

Mr Cruickshank's latest proposals make him look a consumer champion. Under his predecessors, prices have already come down in real terms year after year, shaving billions off phone bills. But he could now be driving down BT's return on capital to the point where it could hurt the company and will prevent any real competition.

A glance at the share price indicates all too clearly that the market suspects he is bent on doing so. Since privatisation, BT shares have underperformed the FT-SE 100 index by about 35 per cent. Virtually no City analyst has listed the stock as a "buy" for the past two years, and investors' opinions are unlikely to change now. Not a good return for Sir David. What he gains on his phone bills he has lost on his shares.

BT will be hard pressed to finance these continued price cuts. With its redundancy programme largely completed, it is hard to see where efficiency savings on this scale will continue to flow from.

BT has little room to negotiate with the regulator. Unless it wants to trigger a monopolies

inquiry, a la British Gas, it will have to accept a new price cap that, in all probability, will last until 2001. To reduce its exposure to regulated returns, it will have to expand its foreign presence. Doing so through the purchase of C&W has now become even more compelling. Or BT can give up and liberate itself from the domestic network.

Mr Cruickshank seems determined to govern BT's network as though it were some social service rather than a fast-changing integrated business. It seems BT might as well cut it adrift and divert its cash flow elsewhere while it still can.

### Early late announcement

NOT since the Chancellor made his ill-fated early morning announcement about share options on the day the Greenbury report was published has the Government made a move as early in the day as Ian Lang's 7am announcement on consulting on late payment.



It is a measure of the political heat that this issue, and the question of small business in general, is now producing that the President of the Board of Trade felt impelled to do so. Just as Kenneth Clarke's move, which he subsequently had to withdraw, was a pre-emptive move to ward off a pre-emptive move, so Mr Lang's dawn declaration was intended to upstage Labour leader Tony Blair's pledge on late payment, planned for a few hours later.

Unfortunately for small business, both moves were largely bogus. Although Mr Blair's statement is the first time that he as party leader has given his personal endorsement to legislation on late payment, such a

commitment has been Labour Party policy for some years.

The Government's early morning move is, if anything, even more questionable. Last week John Major said he personally favoured requiring companies to disclose their payment practices, as well as their payment policy. This they are already legally required to do. Bizarrely, Mr Lang and other ministers blithely went on to explain that the issue was very complicated, and needed considering. Now it will be legal regulations by the autumn — but again, only if appropriate.

What is significant, though, is the sharply different responses to Mr Blair's proposal from the CBI and the small business bodies.

Small businesses also differ on the value of statutory rights on late payment, with some arguing the practical reality of dealing with larger companies is rather different to the theory of legislative provision.

What is clear is that without a strong and growing small business sector, there will be little economic and employment

growth, on which electoral prospects rest. Despite the pitfalls, small business support is still a political prize worth pursuing.

### Take care who you associate with

THE Accounting Standards Board cannot be accused of being inflexible in its latest exposure draft. Earlier proposals to clamp down on abuse of accounting for associate companies and joint ventures have been eased after hurt responses. Sir David Tweedie's reappointment to another term as chairman has, it seems, made him more relaxed, not magisterial.

Most of the changes address practical points, rather than mere general moans. Hence, joint ventures are defined separately, rather than being lumped in with associates. This will accommodate strange Euro and other semi-corporate creatures such as Airbus that essentially act as umbrellas under which individual companies ply their own trades co-operatively. But the draft rules, if turned into a

standard, will organise accounting treatment of joint ventures systematically for the first time.

By laying down less mechanical rules, embarrassments of venture capitalists will be eased while the "associate of convenience" should become a rarity. For instance, a company could no longer equity account an arms-length stake in another, such as the relic of a failed hostile bid. *Per contra*, associates' losses could not be ring-fenced simply by writing them off.

If these gains sound modest, it is because many of the worst abuses have already been stopped. Even the intractable issues of goodwill and intangible assets have been defused. Despite a new farrago over principles, in practice peace is returning and accounting becoming respectable again.

### Praise be damned

THE ghost of Michael Lawrence haunted the Treasury Select Committee last night as his chairman at the Stock Exchange and market makers damned him with the faint praise that the City is so good at. The former Exchange chief was "liked as a man", a "flawed genius" and a "reformer". They were also smart enough to gag Lawrence with his pay-off the night before, or we might have had heard more robust phrases.

## Harrisons & Crosfield to raise £30m in float

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

HARRISONS & Crosfield, the chemicals, timber and foods company, said yesterday that it was aiming to raise £30 million by floating off its remaining plantation interests on the Sydney Stock Exchange.

Harrisons jointly owns the New Britain Palm Oil plantation with the Papua New Guinea Government. Last year the company's 54 per cent stake in the plantation yielded record profits of £26.7 million as the price of palm oil touched an all-time high.

The announcement came as Harrisons revealed a 20 per cent increase in full-year operating profits to £130 million before exceptional items. But pre-tax profits at £120 million were well below last year's

level of £237 million, which included about £140 million in profits from disposals.

Bill Turcan, chief executive, said that the company expected a slow start from the timber and chemicals division, while profits from the plantation division would return to more normal levels as the prices fell.

Mr Turcan added that the company expected to spend up to £300 million on acquisitions this year, concentrating on purchases to fit in with the pigment and timber and building businesses. Mr Turcan said the company was unregretted and that it was confident of raising funds for the acquisitions by increasing debt, although it was not intending to make any hasty decisions.

Profits in the timber and building division fell by 34 per cent to £216 million and the company was forced to make a £5.4 million charge to cover restructuring and the closure of 14 sites with the loss of around 500 jobs.

Harrisons said the action taken should yield cost savings of about £7 million this year, but the company remained cautious over prospects for the division, warning that it was yet to see a major recovery in demand.

A strong performance from the chrome business helped the chemicals and industrial division to increase profits by 26 per cent to £50 million. But the pigment division, which supplies paint companies, suffered from the weak construc-

tion market and destocking in the US.

The food and agricultural division also raised profits by a third to £316 million, with a good showing from the malt and pig businesses. The pet food business performed well, although the animal feed businesses suffered from rising raw material costs and a smaller national pig herd. But the company predicted an improving performance from the food division this year, boosted by continued growth in the malt market.

The total dividend was held at 9p with a final dividend of 5.4p, payable on July 1. Shares in the company fell 4p to close at 167p.

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### Trinity makes progress

TRINITY International Holdings, the newspaper publisher, said that integration of the UK regional newspapers of Thomson Corporation, acquired for £286 million last year, was progressing well (Martin Barrow writes).

The purchase, which transformed Trinity into the biggest regional newspaper company in Britain, was completed on January 8 and had no impact on financial results for 1995. But Philip Graf, chief executive, said the performance of the Thomson newspapers in Belfast, Newcastle, Teesside and Chester had been encouraging.

Trinity pre-tax profits were £27.5 million (£22.9 million) with earnings of 21.5p, against an adjusted 21.5p. The dividend rises to 10.7p (9.7p) with a 7.4p final.

## Marley begins the move out of vehicle products

By CARL MORTIMER

MARLEY, the building products group, is selling part of its automotive products business after another difficult year in which setbacks in all its divisions left pre-tax profits for 1995 down 21 per cent to £46.3 million. Excluding exceptional items, profits fell from £47.8 million to £43.6 million and the full year dividend is maintained at 4.7p.

Marley is selling part of the automotive components division to Magna International, of Canada, for £53.2 million and is in talks to sell its share in the Davidson Marley joint venture, which makes up the rest of its automotive business. Profits in the automotive business, which makes interior trim and instrument panels, fell from £5.5 million to £2.3 million last year over difficult trading in Germany and start-up costs. David



Trapnell: strong orders

Trapnell, Marley's chief executive, said the business needed to invest heavily to meet the demands of car manufacturers who were seeking to consolidate their supply chains. "In the next few years it would be competing with building products for capital," he said. After the sale,

Marley's gearing will fall from 60 per cent to 36 per cent and the anticipated sale of its interest in the joint venture will cut debt further, he said.

A sharp increase in the cost of polymer resin hurt Marley's plastics division, including Syroco, the garden furniture business acquired early last year. Profits from plastics were down from £32.6 million to £30.9 million, while Syroco contributed less than £400,000 over nine months because of a sharp fall in gross margin due to higher costs.

Marley's core concrete and clay products suffered from the slowdown in new housebuilding in the UK and the US but lower volumes were offset in part by higher prices, leaving profits marginally lower than last year. Mr Trapnell said order books were strong.

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### Flextech completes Family deal

By ERIC REGOLY

FLEXTECH, the cable and satellite programming group, announced a flurry of deals, including the purchase of the Family Channel and a controlling stake in the "infomercial" business of the Home Shopping Network.

Flextech, which is half owned by Telecommunications Inc. America's largest cable company, has agreed to buy the 61 per cent of the Family Channel in Britain that it does not already own, from International Family Entertainment Inc. It is paying a total of £30.5 million; made up of £3 million in cash and 5.8 million new shares issued at 47.5p apiece. Flextech shares closed unchanged at 520p.

A new Flextech subsidiary will have a 79 per cent interest in the British infomercial division of the Home Shopping Network as a "further expansion of Flextech's business into electronic retailing".

Flextech reported a pre-tax profit of £16.4 million in the year to December 31, against a loss of £18.5 million in 1994, on turnover that rose 51 per cent to £34 million. The profit figure was boosted by a £33.2 million gain on the sale of assets. Earnings per share were 6.32p against a loss of 21.53p. The operating loss rose from £11.1 million to £13 million, partly because of start-up costs of new channels. No dividends are paid.

Tempus, page 28

## Kwik-Fit plans to grow as profits reach a high

By SARAH BARNALL



Tom Farmer says Kwik-Fit will get 100 new outlets

KWIK-FIT, the chain of car repair centres, plans to open a further 100 outlets and more than double the number of mobile tyre-fitting vehicles during the current year.

The company currently operates through 787 specialist fitting centres and 100 fully equipped mobile tyre-fitting vehicles on the road. The news came as Tom Farmer, the chairman, disclosed that Kwik-Fit had produced record profits and sales in the year ending February 29.

Pre-tax profit rose 24 per cent from £29.3 million to £36.3 million on sales ahead 23 per cent at £365.4 million. Mr Farmer said: "This has been a year of outstanding performance. This was a year when things began to fall into place."

He added that he expected 100 more Kwik-Fit centres would be opened this year, through a combination of acquisitions and organic growth, while the number of mobile units would be increased from 100 to 250 and the service extended to specific sectors of the private motorist.

The final dividend of 3.1p makes a total for the year of 5p, up from 4.4p last time. The dividend, due May 10, is paid out of earnings of 14.7p a share, compared with 11.9p. The shares rose 3½p to 210p.

## Weir engineers a sharp rise

By MARTIN BARROW

SHARES in Weir Group, the engineering products and services group based in Scotland, rose 23p to 250p yesterday after the company reported a sharp rise in profits in 1995 and a record order book.

Pre-tax profits were £45.5 million last year, which compared with reported profits of £30.5 million in 1994 when the company charged £7.8 million against reorganisation costs. At the operating level profits advanced to £42.09 million from £32.46 million.

Profit margins at 6.8 per cent were little changed year-on-year and trading conditions remained competitive. The company

said that it still refused to take orders only to increase volume, and evidence was now emerging of "more sensible" price levels for engineering products in some markets.

In addition, Weir is selectively withdrawing from areas such as the site and erection activities of Strachan & Henshaw, a subsidiary, where the margins available no longer justified the contractual risks involved.

New order input totalled £639 million, which compared with £462 million in the previous year, even though no major despatch contract was booked. The largest single order taken was just £20 million. The final quarter showed a

particularly strong order intake. Turnover of £622 million rose from £576 million in the previous 12 months. The Americas now comprise Weir's single largest market.

Earnings were 16.6p a share, rising from 13p previously and from 16.1p if exceptional items are excluded. The total dividend is increased to 7.5p a share from 6.9p, with a final 5.3p payable on June 14.

Weir ended the year with net debt of £9.7 million, which represents gearing of just 5 per cent. The company expects to use its balance-sheet strength to continue a series of relatively modest acquisitions, with the aim of strengthening its core businesses.

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# London stays in step with downbeat Wall Street

THE London stock market continues to dance to Wall Street's tune. Share prices in the Square have struggled to make headway, before closing with modest losses, mainly reflecting an opening fall of 45 points in the Dow Jones industrial average. By contrast, government securities clawed back early losses to finish with some impressive gains.

The FT-SE 100 index was down almost 20 points in early trading, taking its lead from the overnight setback on Wall Street. Investors' anxiously awaited the latest retail sales figures. These provided further evidence of a revival in the high street, effectively scuppering remaining hopes of another cut in interest rates.

In the event, the index finished 7.6 lower at 3,685.4 in thin trading that saw 703 million shares change hands.

Early attention focused on BT, with the price falling 7p to 344p as investors switched into rival Cable and Wireless, up 8p at 491p. There has been intense speculation in recent weeks about a possible bid by BT for C&W. BT's case will not have been helped by the new pricing formula issued yesterday by Ofel, the industry regulator. Under Ofel's proposals, telephone bills may fall by as much as 9 per cent and could result in the average bill being slashed by at least £50 a time. BT was clearly unimpressed and said further jobs may have to go.

An industry expert claimed last night that BT could be worth up to £37 billion if it were broken up into six separate divisions. It is currently capitalised at £22 billion.

Johnson Matthey, the precious metals group, stood out with a rise of 9p at 581p. Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, is selling clients that recent weakness in the shares presents a buying opportunity.

There was a big put-through recorded in shares of Royal Bank of Scotland just before the official close of business. A line of about 3 million shares was placed at 533p before being sold on at 538p. The price closed 8p off at 537p.

The biggest fall on the day was recorded in Telecel, down 117p at 695p, after full-year figures failed to live up to expectations. The communications specialist was brought to market in October 1994 by Credit Lyonnais Laing and has seen its shares reach £10.45.



Don Lewin's Clinton Cards was steady despite higher profits

Costs are still being cut at Harrison & Crossfield, but it does not appear to be benefiting profits which took a nose dive last year. At the operating level, profits were up, but at the pre-tax level, they were down. The company was determined to protect margins at the expense of volumes and said it had seen a modest rise in demand to

Marley, 1p firmer at 129p.

Elys (Wimbledon), the stores group, is a good example of why there is scope for an order-driven trading system being introduced. It found itself on the receiving end of a 750p offer from Panther Securities, but an absence of competitive market-making in the shares meant they finished unchanged at 550p.

Also suffered a tough time last year with pre-tax profits down from an unadjusted £58.7 million to £46.3 million. Trading conditions were described as tough, with Sir George Russell claiming that prospects for the current year depended on the levels of activity in the housing and refurbishment markets in both Britain and the US. The group has sold its automotive arm for £53.5 million.

wards the end of the year which may help it recover some losses. The group played down speculation that it was desperate to make an acquisition.

Britannic Assurance failed to benefit from a near doubling of profits last year, with the shares sliding 3p to 779p. Weir Group responded to an impressive profits rise with a jump of 23p to 258p. As

the Bank of England was able to supply further tranches of the new tap Index-Linked Treasury 2s per cent 2009.

NEW YORK: Wall Street shares were weaker at midday as an earnings warning from Digital Equipment Corp sent the technology sector reeling. The Dow Jones industrial average shed 33.60 to 5,635.91.

Shares of Torex Hrv returned from suspension 9p higher at 41p after the completion of an acquisition.

GILT-EDGED: Prices opened lower, reflecting stronger than expected German money supply figures.

In the futures pit, the June series of the long gilt closed £19.52 higher at £105.16 as turnover rose sharply with a total of 65,500 contracts completed.

Among conventional issues, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 jumped £2.34 to 597.16, while at the shorter end, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was six ticks better at £102.73.

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brokers began upgrading their profit forecasts for the current year. Weir said it had scope to make some substantial acquisitions.

Hanson appears to have placed most of its holding in Wassall, the fast-growing industrial conglomerate. Brokers reported a put-through of 4.28 million shares at 270p. About 3.5 million of them were later sold on at 277p. ABN Amro Hoare Govett, Hanson's own broker, is believed to have transacted the business. It coincided with full-year figures from Wassall, up 10p to 287p, showing pre-tax profits last year more than doubling to £57.5 million.

Better than expected full-year figures Kwik Fit Holdings, the brakes and exhausts specialists, lifted the shares 3p to 202p. A flat performance last year left Bernard Matthews, the turkey producer, 3p easier at 95p, while Clinton Cards was unchanged at 153p after raising profits last year from £2.6 million to £3.2 million.

CRH, the Irish aggregates group, is splashing out \$87 million to acquire the Jack B Parsons Companies, the Utah aggregates business. CRH finished 4p better at 574p.

Shares of Synaqua Engineering were suspended at 61p as it announced plans to hit the acquisition trail. It is acquiring Zlin, of Tewkesbury, the supplier of printed circuit boards for £11.5 million.

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## MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday): Dow Jones 5635.91 (-33.60) S&P Composite 447.70 (-3.01)

Tokyo: Nikkei Average 10836.53 (+43.97)

Hong Kong: Hang Seng 10836.53 (+43.97)

Amsterdam: AEX 327.72 (+0.21)

Sydney: All Ordinaries 2284.14 (-4.79)

Frankfurt: DAX 2495.90 (-7.39)

Singapore: Straits Times 2383.96 (+1.34)

Brussels: CAC 40 8722.95 (+1.75)

Paris: CAC 40 8722.95 (+1.75)

Zurich: SMI 267.30 (+1.70)

London: FT 100 3685.4 (-7.6)

FT 250 4282.2 (-4.0)

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## TEMPUS

Wassall on a high wire



# THE TIMES

## CITY DIARY

### Scott faces the chop

THE Labour-run Edinburgh Council confirmed yesterday it is exploring the possibility of selling the famous Sir Walter Scott monument on Princes Street — not least because an estimate for complete renovation has been put at more than £2.5 million.

Sponsorship is one option but the initial reaction from Scottish companies was mixed. There was a thumbs down from Baxter's and a lukewarm response from the department store Jenners, which uses the monument in its promotional material. But Macsween's, Edinburgh's renowned manufacturer of haggis, was more positive. "Perhaps a fund-raising dinner would be an idea," said marketing director Jo Macsween. "We'd be happy to provide free haggis."

### Nuclear fall-out

KWIK-FIT, Europe's largest independent auto motive parts repair and replacement specialist, came swiftly to the rescue after it received a desperate call from the staff of a nuclear submarine based in Plymouth docks earlier this year. The submarine, declared unfit to continue on its tour of duty, because mariners kept falling out of their bunks in rough seas, put in an urgent request for 66 car safety belts.

### Dynamic duo

BOOTHFUL Bernard Matthews is looking forward to spending Easter in his holiday house near St Tropez. Along with a leg of lamb, the birdman of Norfolk is packing Tom Poole's biography of Horatio Nelson. "There are only two famous persons in Norfolk — and I'm one of them," he chuckles.



"Sell BT — buy Ofel"

### EMU fan

When CarnaudMetal Box was taken over by Crown Cork & Seal, the American firm, last month, to become the world's largest packing company, some investors in the company sold their shares. They had to wait up to three weeks for the cash. Cheques made out in francs seemed to travel around Europe before being paid. Roll on the single currency, said one shareholder who received his cheque yesterday and tried to work out what he had lost in interest and exchange rates.

### Double trouble

LYOYD'S names suffered another blow yesterday. A company specialising in financial planning has put a surcharge on the hapless names. Lyndon Wealthcare, a service provided by Lyndon Investments, a wholly owned subsidiary of the West Country chartered accountant Robson Taylor, is charging an extra £40 a month for its subscription-based service "because of the complexity of their personal affairs".

THE largest ever trade mission to Pakistan next week could be accused of poppaddons to Lahore. Among the 65 companies taking part on the trip, which is to be led by Trade Minister Lord Fraser, is Derby-based Khan Foods, the manufacturers of "authentic" Indian noosh.

## ECONOMIC VIEW

ANATOLE KALETSKY



# American capitalism has defeated 'peasants' revolt

US remained a land of opportunity even during the decades of misery

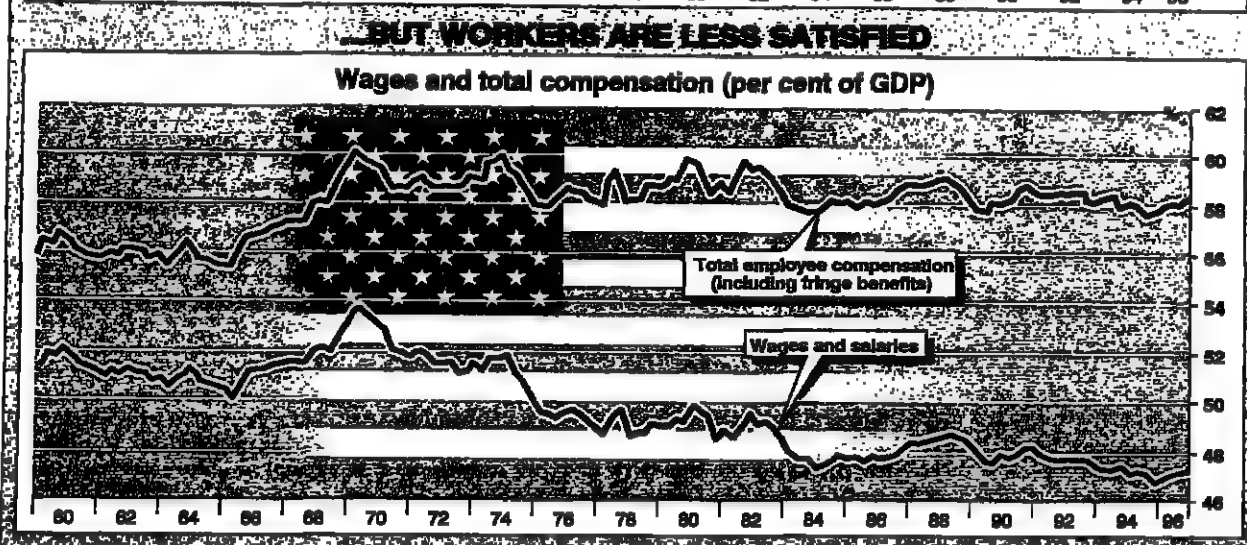
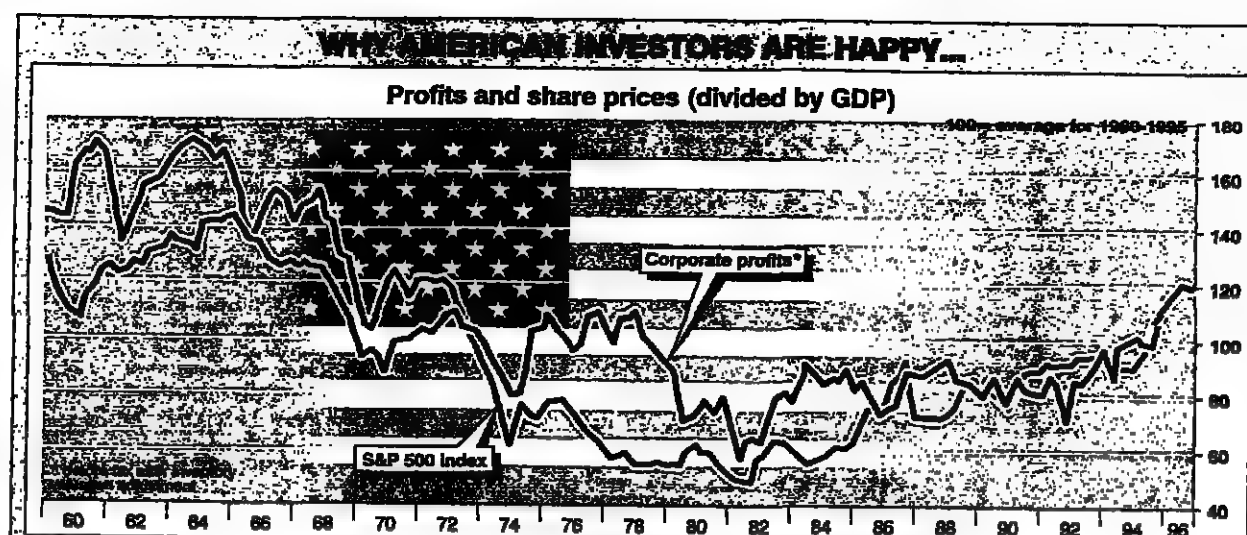
THE "peasants' revolt" against America's capitalist values seems to have fizzled out almost before it started. Perhaps Pat Buchanan, the far-right presidential candidate who likened his supporters to "peasants with pitchforks" descending upon the overpaid "corporate job-killers", should have read up in his history books about the late of Wat Tyler at Smithfield.

Be that as it may, after all the alarms about unmanageability and the breakdown of the capitalist ideological consensus, America is now almost certain to be presented with an eminently civilised choice between two of the most centrist presidential candidates ever selected by the Republican and Democratic parties. It is perhaps no coincidence that Wall Street has reverted to its tedious habit of hitting a new all-time high every other day.

The collapse of the "Buchanan factor" raises fascinating questions for politicians and economists, as well as stock-market investors. Is it possible, for example, that commentators have exaggerated America's crisis of confidence and the pain of the "new insecurity" created by corporate restructuring and free trade? Is it conceivable that American workers are not as angry about falling industrial wages and growing income inequality as everyone had assumed? Could it be that company profits will go on growing in relation to national income, as they have done with only brief cyclical interruptions since 1981?

These questions are of interest not only to Americans, but also to Europeans. Declining living standards, psychological insecurity and political disintegration are seen in America's remarkable record for creating jobs, or McJobs as European cynics prefer to call them. But if Americans are not really horrified by the state of their society — if, indeed, Americans are more optimistic about America than many Europeans are about Europe — then that deals with one of the main objections to the American economic model of flexible labour markets and active demand management to sustain full employment.

The question about the share of profits in national income may seem more narrowly financial but is also of huge political significance. If it is true — as many commentators, including Americans, believe — that the share of profits in national income has now hit an unsustainable cyclical peak, then the present rebound in the US economy will soon fizzle out in a struggle between labour and capital, a burst of inflation, a tightening of monetary policy and another recession. And if this happens in America, the rest of the world will almost certainly follow it.



into recession within the next few years.

If, on the other hand, the rise in US profits and the willingness of American workers to limit their share of national income is part of a long-term secular trend, then the present business cycle could have many more years to go before it runs into a serious problem of inflation and rising interest rates. Eventually, of course, there will be a recession, since aggregate demand and supply can never run perfectly in balance. But the next recession may prove an unusually mild one — and America's unemployment rate may fall well below today's already low level of 5.7 per cent, before the Government and the Federal Reserve Board decide they must put on the brakes. This argument can be summarised in another question, which in a sense encompasses all the others.

Could it be that the recent surge of job creation, investment and profitability in America will not prove an aberration? Could it be that the flexibility and openness of America's markets, along with the pragmatism and skill of its monetary policymakers, have created the conditions for another long era of non-inflationary growth similar to the Keynesian golden age of the 1950s and 1960s?

Clearly it is impossible to answer such huge questions in a single article (or, in fact, to answer them with confidence at all). But suspecting, as I long have, that the late 1990s are indeed quite like the 1950s, I will just make some observations that are frequently overlooked, especially in cynical Europe. The first two are obvious from the charts. Corporate profits have risen sharply since the 1982 recession which marked the climax of the worldwide economic

crises of the 1970s, but profits are still quite moderate by the standards of the pre-1970 "golden age". In fact, in the fourth quarter of 1995, the national accounts measure of corporate profits as a share of GDP was very close to the 1960-95 average (represented as 100 in the chart). Even assuming that profits grew by a further 15 to 20 per cent this year, America's profit share would be in the lower half of the range that prevailed in the 1960s. There seems no reason to suppose that this profit share of between 9 and 10 per cent of GDP will be unsustainable.

Looking at the lower chart suggests some reasons for such optimism. While it is true that

'The next recession may prove an unusually mild one'

the share of wages and salaries in US national income has fallen sharply since 1970, there are several consolations for American workers.

First there is the widening gap between the two lines in this chart. The lower line, which represents cash wages and salaries has been falling. But the upper line, which takes into account non-cash compensation, including pension contributions and health insurance costs, has remained fairly stable since the late 1960s and is still somewhat higher than it was until 1966. Much of the apparent fall in US wages simply reflects the sharp rise in non-wage employment costs, above all on health care.

Health spending now absorbs 13 per cent of Ameri-

ca's GDP and more than a third of this is financed by employers' insurance payments. To a large extent, therefore, the disappointing growth in American workers' living standards can be blamed simply on the spiralling cost of America's astonishingly inefficient insurance-based private health system (which some Tories are so anxious to imitate). If America had a national health service as efficient as Britain's, its workers could have received 6 per cent more of GDP in wages — equivalent to a real pay increase of 13 per cent, taking the wage share of GDP well above its 1970 peak.

The charts also show that the big decline in the wage share occurred after 1970 and was over by 1982. It is true, of course, that 28 million more Americans are working now than in the 1980s so that wages per worker have continued to lag behind the growth of GDP.

I do not believe for a moment in the monetarist or "classical" theory of the labour market, which insists that lower wages are a necessary and sufficient condition to restore full employment. But it is undeniable, simply as a matter of arithmetic, that if an economy creates jobs for growing numbers of relatively unskilled workers (including many millions of immigrants and women who were previously not in the labour market), then average real wages cannot grow as rapidly as GDP. This will be true particularly if the economic structure tries to preserve the shares of profits, rents, pensions and other forms of income.

This leads to a third consolation for American workers — and perhaps the most important reason why they are not as disgruntled as some of the crude statistics on real wages would imply. While average

real wages have indeed fallen slightly and the distribution of income has dramatically widened, these statistics do not accurately reflect what has happened to individual Americans. The poor may be getting poorer. A number of recent studies tracking the incomes of individual households have shown that most poor Americans move up the income distribution quite rapidly as soon as they find work. For example, a study recently published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas looked at American families who were among the poorest 20 per cent of the income distribution in 1971. It found that only 5.1 per cent of these people were still among the poorest 16 years later. In fact, two thirds of these people had graduated into the top half of income distribution by 1991.

America, it seems, remained a land of opportunity even during the miserable 1970s and 1980s. I suspect it could do a great deal better in the years ahead.

## Potent products that lost their pulling power

Martin Waller mourns the passing of Seventies items now branded as failures

It is a Saturday evening in the early 1970s. The scene is a teenage party. In the living room, Slade bellow and couples twirl and grope. On the kitchen table are two bottles of Hironelle, one almost empty, a Party Seven, opened, and a scattering of cans of Colt 45 and Double Diamond.

Now it is the 1990s. Many of the couples have teenage groopers of their own. Slade are somewhere on the revival circuit, but none of the drinks has managed the same degree of longevity. Hironelle was a bland and blended wine, and Party Four and Seven were undistinguished gassy cans of bitter so named for the number of pints they contained. Double Diamond was a keg bitter, quite dreadful but still available in a few places. Colt 45 was probably some kind of beer, although it would have taken a forensic scientist to prove it.

There is nothing quite so nostalgic, or so dispiriting, as those products we knew from our youth, and their associated catch-phrases and jingles, now gone the way of the hula hoop and the Rubik Cube.

Babycham's catch-phrase became its curse. Order it at the public bar and a wit would mimic "I'd la-ave a Babycham" in a false Essex GtH accent. The demise of the keg bitter, Red Barrel, was hastened by five minutes of well-aimed sadism from the Monty Python team — and their Watney's Red Barrel.

Paul Stobart at Interbrand, a specialist consultancy, thinks that properties such as Double Diamond may not be worthless. "There are a whole range of perceptions of Double Diamond — you can see the logo, you can still hear the jingle," he says. "It is about understanding the brand and how it ought to be positioned to its target market. Brands that try to be all things to everybody are very hard to sustain."

The demise of Red Barrel and Babycham came well before accountants allowed companies to take brands on to balance sheets, therefore assuring shareholders that such intangible assets had some assessable worth in the real world. The inevita-

ble lesson to be drawn is that some of the brands with firm values now will become worthless.

Andy Nash, managing director of Matthew Clark Taunton, one of the drinks industry's biggest distributors, insists: "Experience tells us that a strong, well-entrenched brand should be there for the long haul if it's managed very carefully." He points to the Chicago Business School study that showed the leading brand names of the 1920s were still around 60 years later.

But it is in the so-called B brands, the middle layer that are neither cheap and cheerful nor, to echo a successful campaign of recent years, "reassuringly expensive", that the real slaughter has taken place. They have been killed by the big supermarkets, which find shelf space for the brand leaders and for their own-label products. There is no space for also-rans.

David Scotland, president for Europe at Allied Domecq's spirits and wine business, which owns Canadian Club and Ballantine's

whiskies, is scathing about his industry's reliance on names that have lost their lustre. "People in my industry could have a pretty comfortable life because B brands were still selling."

Allied is having success selling Scotch to young consumers in Spain and Sweden, who are turning against their parents' tipple. But in Britain, Scotch drinking is in managed decline, consumption falling at about 2 per cent a year, in spite of the growing popularity of expensive single malts. The culprit, says Mr Scotland, is the industry's reliance on its traditional tartan image. "Scottish values are not going to make whisky interesting to young people."

On the Continent, wine drinking is falling in France and Italy, increasingly replaced by imported spirits. In France, Pernod is in decline; in Germany, schnapps is less favoured. Even in Russia the emerging prosperous classes are turning their backs on vodka — and Russian society once ran on vodka just as teenage parties were fuelled by Double Diamond.

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## Simplification of law on small businesses is overdue

From Mr Des Keenan

Sir, It would be a pity if Mr Heseltine's excellent proposals regarding the simplification of law concerning small businesses were to be drowned by waves of synthetic outrage from interested parties.

A careful look at the accumulated "rights of labour" and the corresponding "duties of employers" is long overdue. About 1870 the traditional "master and servant" legislation with all its feudal overtones was swept away, and replaced by "employer and employee" legislation based on the simple contract.

But in fact the simple contract agreed by both parties, and terminable by both parties according to the term of the contract, was not put in force, or not for long. Shops Acts, Factory Acts, Workers' Compensation Acts and Employers' Liability Acts, Employment of Children Acts, Workers' Insurance Acts, PAYE Acts, and VAT Acts

were added (not to mention decisions of various European courts). Other workers' "rights" such as a "right" to redundancy compensation even for hourly workers and members of the Armed Services crept in.

It was of course always the aim of organised labour and its parliamentary representatives to screw as much cash and benefits from the bosses as possible. The employers too could offer inducements. We end up with a mass of legislation, and of customary practice.

Who should pay for toilets for the workers? Who for staff canteens? Who for protective gear? Who for wet-weather gear? Who for illness? Who for maternity? When should the state pay? When should the employer? Can an hourly-paid worker be unfairly dismissed? Should every employer have a little booklet stating the terms of contract and employment and be obliged to give a copy of this to every employee, even

to those sent round just to gather the potatoes? Do these laws and practices create "rights"? Are these rights enforceable in the European Court of Human Rights? If they are only created by statute can they be removed by statute?

I am a self-employed person. I make an agreement with my customers/employers regarding price. I do the job; he pays me. If I don't like the job, I don't do it. I rather fancy this is closer to the idea of the legislators in the 1870s than what we ended up with now. Yours faithfully, DES KEENAN, 129 Bluebird Walk, Chalk Hill Road, Wembley Park, Middlesex.

Letters to the Business and Finance section of The Times can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

## Agreeing terms with Lloyd's

From R. N. Bowes

Sir, Your columns have recently contained a number of letters from members of Lloyd's dissatisfied with the progress towards settlement. It is unfortunate that a number of people have been severely damaged by their membership of Lloyd's, but I would not like your readers to think that many names will not support Lloyd's in their settlement suggestions. I suspect that the number in favour of settlement will constitute a large majority. It is unfortunate that the loudest noise is made by a relatively small number of people, many of whom are also fully capable of meeting their liabilities.

Yours faithfully, R N BOWES, Fairacre, Ennon, Godalming, Surrey.



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## Strong rise in profits lifts shares in Wassall

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

SHARES in Wassall, the diversified industrial company, climbed 10p to 287p after the company revealed a 32 per cent increase in full-year profits before exceptional items to £55.1 million, and predicted further progress this year.

Wassall was boosted by a strong performance from its General Cable subsidiary, where profits doubled to £36 million. But both DAP, the DIY business, and the closures division suffered from an increase in raw material prices.

The company said that following a decline in raw material prices this year it was confident of an im-

proved performance from the two divisions.

Wassall was also optimistic about its 70 per cent interest in Singapore-listed Wassall Asia Pacific, which was acquired for £18.4 million in November, saying that it provided an exciting entry into the fast-growing Asian economies.

Underlying profit before tax and exceptional items, which excludes a £4.4 million profit from favourable copper prices, rose 42 per cent to £50.7 million. Overall, sales increased by more than 50 per cent to £970 million. The total dividend was raised by 34 per cent to 5.5p, with a final dividend of 3.95p (2.95p) payable on May 17.

Profits at DAP suffered from what the company described as the most difficult market conditions for five years, falling 23 per cent to £10.4 million. The closures division was also hit by a large increase in raw material prices and in spite of a growth in sales, profits were flat at £12.7 million.

Wassall finished the year with gearing at 29 per cent and interest cover at more than ten times. The company said that it would invest heavily this year and would also consider further acquisitions, but anticipated a reduction in borrowing over the year.

Wassall said that the profit increase at General Cable had resulted in the company meeting targets set when the subsidiary was bought in 1994, well ahead of schedule. Margins increased to 4.6 per cent while turnover grew by 90 per cent to £672 million, boosted by strong demand for low-voltage cable. Wassall added that it was confident of making further progress this year through a series of long-term contracts for low-voltage wire and strong demand for datacom wire.

The industrial and commercial division achieved a mixed performance, with profits growing from £0.9 million to £2.9 million, although the office furniture businesses suffered from a sluggish market.

Tempus, page 28

### Turnround for Usborne

Usborne, the agricultural services group whose chairman is Lord Parkinson, has returned to profit. The company earned £325,000 before tax in the half year to December 31, compared with losses of £438,000 previously. Earnings were 0.76p a share (1.97p loss). There is again no interim dividend.

**Brandon advance**  
Brandon Hire, the tool hire company based in Bristol, lifted 1995 pre-tax profits to £1.5 million (£716,000). Acquisitions contributed £352,000 to total operating profits of £1.8 million. Adjusted earnings rose to 8p a share from 4.8p. The total dividend rises to 2.25p a share from 1.7p.

**Beauford ahead**  
Beauford, the ceramics and engineering group, lifted pre-tax profits 30 per cent to £2 million in 1995 on turnover up 23 per cent to £41.1 million. Adjusted earnings were 3.87p (3.82p) a share. There is a final dividend of 0.4p (0.25p).



Bernard Matthews said it is too early to judge if the price rise will hit sales

### Matthews outlook uncertain

BERNARD MATTHEWS, the poultry and meat processing group, yesterday revealed it had raised prices for the first time in several years to counter the impact of sharply higher raw material costs (Sarah Bagnall writes).

The inability to predict the success in recovering the in-

creased costs, together with start-up costs of two new factories, prompted the company to tell shareholders the outlook for the first half of 1996 was uncertain. Bernard Matthews, chairman, said: "After Christmas we increased prices by about 5 per cent overall. So far so good, but it is too early to say what the impact will be on sales."

The news came as the company revealed static pre-tax profits of £18.7 million on sales up 6.5 per cent to £302 million in the year to December 31. A 2p final makes a 3.39p total year's dividend, up from 3.14p, payable on May 3.

## Rethink on joint venture accounts

BY GRAHAM SEARJEANT

THE Accounting Standards Board has bowed to business opinion and abandoned a proposal to treat associate companies and joint ventures as a single category of strategic alliance. Instead, the board has introduced two new concepts of joint ventures, according to whether the venture operates as a single concern, or is just an umbrella body for partner companies' interests.

Sir David Tweedie, the board's chairman, said that joint ventures were becoming much more common and companies had not previously had clear accounting rules to deal with them.

Proposals in an early discussion paper, which called for much more detailed disclosure of the results of associates have also been scaled back to ease potential burdens on business. The board now asks only for aggregate figures.

Companies will, however, no longer have such scope to massage their accounts. Under FRED 11, the draft for a new accounting standard on associates and joint ventures, definitions of associates will be tightened up.

The board aims to ensure that a company can only account its share of profits in future if it exercises significant permanent influence as well as controlling a fifth of a supposed associate company.

The proposals will make life easier for venture capital companies. Joint ventures will normally be equity accounted. But if the operations and assets of each company in the joint venture are essentially separate, their interest will be consolidated in their own accounts, as if it were part of their business. The board is asking for comments on its exposure draft by June 28.

Pennyington, page 27

### BUSINESS ROUNDUP

## Results warning at Newman Tonks

NEWMAN TONKS, the architectural products supplier to the building industry, warned shareholders that the cost of further rationalisation implemented as a result of continuing poor UK trading conditions would have an adverse effect on first-half results. The company said that after the £30 million acquisition of Dor-O-Matic in February, America was its most profitable single market.

The company reported 1995 profits of £27.2 million before tax, which included an exceptional profit on disposals of £10.1 million. Profits in 1994 were £20.2 million. Earnings, excluding the exceptional profit, were down 20 per cent at 8.48p a share (10.65p). The total dividend rises to 6.9p a share from 6.75p, with a final 4p. The shares fell 5p to 120p. Christopher Hughes, chairman, said UK results were severely affected by a downturn in the market from the second quarter.

## CRH expands in US

CRH, the building materials group, has acquired Jack B Parson, an American aggregates, asphalt and paving company based in Utah, for \$87 million. Parson will become part of Oldcastle, CRH's US holding company. The enlarged group will have more than 100 operating locations in ten states. Annual output will include 18 million tonnes of aggregates; annual sales will be about \$450 million. In 1995 Parson made profits of \$15 million on sales of \$109 million.

## Keller increases payout

KELLER GROUP, the ground engineering specialist, lifted profits 19 per cent in 1995, relying almost entirely on organic growth. Profits were £11.2 million before tax (£9.4 million) while adjusted earnings rose to 11.7p (10.3p). The total dividend is increased 10 per cent to 5.3p, with a final foreign income dividend of 3.55p a share. The company said there was an excellent performance by North American operations while UK results improved against the trend in the construction industry.

## Devro advances 7%

DEVRO INTERNATIONAL, the sausage skin maker, has unveiled a 7 per cent pre-tax profits rise to £31.2 million last year. The company said that, as of December 4 last year, Devro America had been treated as a discontinued business and the profit and loss account includes the results of that business up until then. Integration of Teepak in the US will cost £10 million, the company said. The dividend for the year is 7.7p (7.05p) with the final payment of 5.1p due on May 23.

## Evans Halshaw flat

EVANS HALSHAW, the multifranchise motor distribution group, said the continuing downward trend in car purchasing by the retail sector still gave cause for concern, although the company was trading ahead of the market. Pre-tax profits were almost unchanged at £13.6 million (£13.5 million), despite a rise in turnover to £834.8 million (£668.7 million). Earnings were 28.8p a share (34.2p). The total dividend is 16.5p a share (15p), with a final of 11p, due on May 11.

## Symonds buys for £11m

SYMONDS ENGINEERING is acquiring Zlin, a manufacturer of printed circuit boards, for £11.5 million. The acquisition is being funded through a placing and open offer of new shares, raising £11.5 million. New shares are being issued at 50p. Existing shares were suspended at 61p yesterday. Last year Zlin earned profits £1.98 million before tax on turnover of £6.7 million. Symonds has forecast profits before tax of not less than £1.4 million for the year to March 31.

## European recovery lifts Blenheim

RECOVERY in the UK, France and Germany helped Blenheim, the exhibition organiser, to a 17.5 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £35.6 million last year (Patricia Tehan writes).

France was the biggest profit contributor, with an increase of 46 per cent to £14.3 million. UK profits rose 50 per cent to £7.2 million and in Germany there was a 35 per cent rise to £6.2 million. All three

benefited from cost-cutting and restructuring measures in 1994. The only black spot was the US where, said Neville Buch, the chairman, the company suffered from competitive pressures.

Mr Buch sounded a note of warning about prospects for the current year. He said the exhibition business tends to trail GDP by 12 or 18 months and "there are indications of a slowdown in GDP in

France and Germany". Blenheim's profits were struck after charging £1.8 million in restructuring costs.

The dividend for the year has been increased from 10.35p to 10.5p, covered by earnings of 20.7p, up 38 per cent. Mr Buch said the firm was concentrating on having dividend cover of two times, in line with the sector. The final payment of 7p is due on July 5.

# Future of the UK profession

It is time to recognise that the ideology of the Eighties was flawed, says Noel Hepworth

Just what is the future relationship to be between the different UK accountancy bodies? On the answer to that question will depend the future role of the accountancy club, the Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies (CCAB). Mergers, given the latest failure between the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants and the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, are clearly off the agenda. The uniqueness of the British profession — its strength and diversity — therefore comes to the fore. Can it be maintained?

The ideology of the 1980s sought to teach us that success depends upon competition. The 1990s have started to show the significant flaws in that ideology. What emerged in the profession in the 1980s, accentuated by the recession in the 1990s, was full-blooded competition between the accountancy bodies with the publicly unstated (but privately stated) aim of reducing the number of accountancy bodies by competitive action.

No wonder relationships between the bodies deteriorated and it became difficult to achieve any sort of agreement about the way forward. To adapt Clauswitz, negotiations

became the pursuit of the removal of a competitor by other means. Has the profession recognised the flaws in that ideology?

If the accountancy bodies continue to follow the argument that competition produces the best decisions, then that will determine the role of the accountancy club. At best it will not be able to become more than a trade association, which will have no real function except that of any other trade association — to protect the collective interest.

The result will be that the individual bodies will continue to pour their own members' resources into the competitive fight with each other. Trust, which is so essential to collective action, will continue to diminish and the complaints about unfair competition and a lowering of standards will remain.

The CCAB will be in no position to manage relationships, or to encourage a general shift to higher standards, because agreement will only be possible if competitive positions are not affected. In practice, agreement will only occur on those issues that do not affect the ability of the bodies to compete for student numbers. The profession, as a result, risks becoming increas-



Noel Hepworth calls for trust to achieve co-operation

ingly vulnerable to criticism. It will not be able to focus upon those issues which really do threaten it, from the alienation of members to a failure to measure up to the demands of the global economy.

If, however, the accountancy bodies were prepared to see that the future lies through co-operation and a profession that is strong and diversified,

then the role of the accountancy club will be different. To achieve co-operation requires a rebuilding of trust (always very hard to do and so easy to destroy). The role of the CCAB would then be to secure the active development of the profession as a whole, chivvying the weaker or recalcitrant to match the success of the best, or the profession as a

whole to match the changing needs of the marketplace.

The role of the CCAB then is the management of the profession as a whole, including an ability to require member bodies to take remedial actions when appropriate. For that, all members need to have trust in its independent judgement.

None of this will be easy. It will mean sacrificing the sacred cow of competition on the altar of co-operation. It will mean rethinking the whole structure of the CCAB, because it would have a new managerial role.

We have experimented with competition within the profession. Can we not admit it has failed us? In the next few months the profession ought to address the implications.

It will not be easy because trust is lacking. But we should try. New institutions to manage the profession will cost a lot more money, as will proposals to reform regulation and the setting of auditing standards. Members will not want to pay because they see no benefit to them. Yet substituting co-operation for competition should work wonders for marketing budgets.

The reality is that the pessimistic scenario will emerge: cosmetic adjustments to relationships with no substantive shifts in position. How can trust be rebuilt in such circumstances?

Noel Hepworth is Director of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (Cipfa).

## Forget the bonfire of regulations

MOST accountants in practice never advise or audit the ICIs of this world. And they wouldn't know what to do if they did. Instead, they look after the heartland of the economy — small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These are the start-ups, the family-owned companies, the owner-managed enterprises. Or they are known by their other generic name — trouble.

This is the world at which all the Government's many wars on red tape, its efforts to lift the burdens on business, are aimed. This is the world where, in the popular view, small companies are crippled by late-paying behemoths, brought low by stingy and uncaring banks, bailed at every stage by unfair distribution systems and crippled by the bureaucracy and cost of being forced to have a statutory audit.

The truth tends to be the opposite, however uncomfortable it is for the myth of the beleaguered small business person. Two reports bear this out. The first, *The Failure of Owner-Managed Businesses*, was written by a team at Imperial College's management school and sponsored by BDO Stoy Hayward, and the English ICA's excellent research board. The second, published this week, *The 1996 Pulse Survey*, is by a team at the London Business School, sponsored by Binder Hamlyn. Both show that when SMEs complain that the world is against them, they are usually complaining about the wrong thing. "Too much bureaucracy is certainly only likely to be the reason why businesses with potential fail to grow," said Mary Reilly, of Binder Hamlyn.

"But our research confirms that it is the director's attitude towards growth that is crucially important. Without the right attitude, a business with everything going for it will often fail. Yet other businesses will succeed against all odds due to sheer determination." The report on failures produced even more interesting conclusions. Whereas the Binder Hamlyn report is based on businesses' opinions, the BDO Stoy Hayward report is based on the views of the bankers and accountants of failed small businesses. A two-thirds majority said that if remedial action had been taken over a variety of problems, the businesses would not have failed. The problems included "autocratic, inflexible owners making decisions based on emotion, who either failed to seek outside help or who resisted that which was offered," a "poor management team with insufficient experience, inap-

propriate mix of skills, or failure to delegate managerial responsibility," "poor operations management," "lack of family succession," and, most damning of all, "a weak business concept and a lack of planning".

The important point about all those reasons for failure is that none of them are technical. They are all human failings. The collapse of the businesses was not because of the wrong sort of overdraft or the wrong sort of accounting standard. It was simply because the senior management was not up to the job, or simply didn't do it. Binder's report backs this up. "Specifically, our research showed that company growth is more often determined by internal factors than by the external business environment," it said. The research found, for example, that "internal factors hostile towards growth (eg, lack of innovation, fear of diluting ownership, or aversion to debt) dominate external factors conducive to growth (eg, lack of market growth, availability of loans/overdrafts, or high labour costs); and internal factors conducive to growth tend to dominate external factors hostile towards it." In other words, companies that manage themselves successfully should have little to complain about which is not under their direct control. If a company is well-managed and those managers are working hard in a focused way then most problems will either be overcome or will not become problems in the first place. For example, the perennial complaint that banks never provide enough funding is dealt with deftly in Binder's report. "The availability of loans and overdrafts was inclined to be a minor constraint for high-growth companies and a major constraint for poorly performing ones," it said.

Peter Hemington, at BDO Stoy Hayward, put his finger unerringly on the same point. "It is interesting to note," he said, "that those managers who did ask for help were more likely to approach their banker than their accountant. This suggests that owner-managers believe additional funding will solve their problems whereas they should be looking at the more fundamental business issues."

So we should forget the fuss about burdens on business and bonfires of regulations. That has only to do with vote-gathering. The real burdens on business, as both of these reports show, are poor management and an insistence on blaming others for its consequences.



ROBERT BRUCE

### Whistle-blower true and fair

ON Saturday, 75,000 people are arguing about your every decision. On Monday morning, you are back sorting out a tax query or two. Welcome to the world of Eddie Murray, the Scots chartered accountant who made his international debut as a referee in last Saturday's England-Ireland rugby match at Twickenham. He enjoyed the game, "once

I'd stopped shaking" and reported that "you can hardly hear yourself think" amid the roaring of the crowd. But as a partner in a small firm in Greenock on the Firth of Clyde it is quiet enough for the rest of his week. His first call as a referee was in 1981. "I was in the Greenock Wanderers bar and they said they were short of a referee and would I do it."

### Win some...

SOMETIMES you can't win. Last Friday, the English ICA announced that it had become the first professional body to win an Investors in People award. The Government's training standard. But on the same day, an independent report said that the scheme was reckoned to be too complex,

poorly marketed and bureaucratic. Just what members sometimes say of the institute.

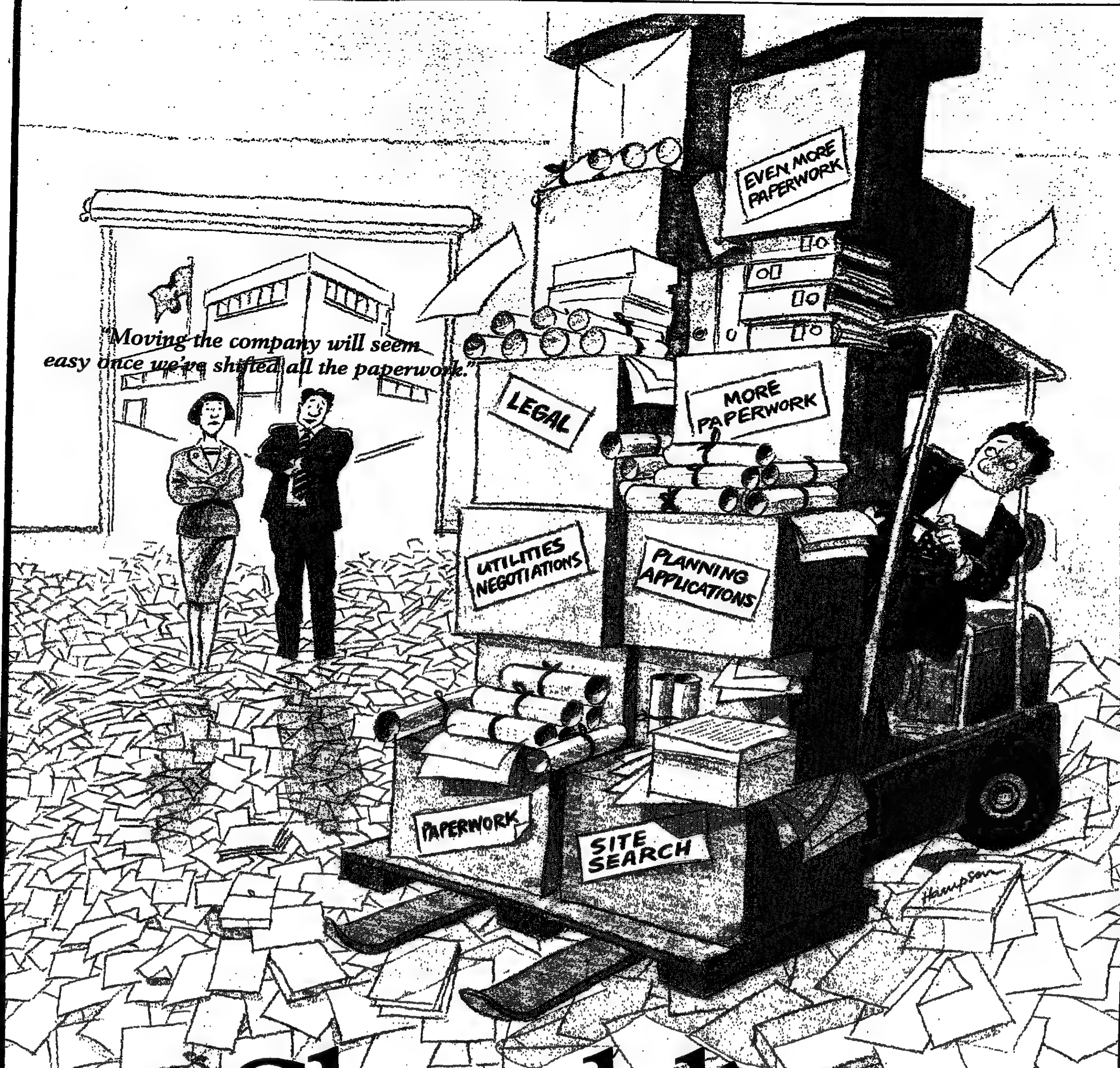
### Tail-enders

FOR the sedentary cricketer who prefers to get into trim for the summer season with a session on the Net — rather than in the nets — Coopers & Lybrand has provided some

entertainment. As sponsor of the world cricket ratings, it is holding a ballot for the best player of the year. The nominations fall to include a single England player and the web address is longer than the names of the Sri Lankan team put together, but they promise to update the voting figures on the site. Vote by next Friday on <http://www.coopers.co.uk/cricket/ratings/competition/index.htm>.

ROBERT BRUCE





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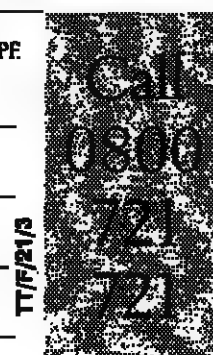
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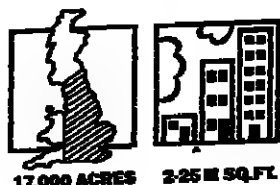
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## Small losses in thin trading

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## ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
566	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
567	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
568	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
569	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
570	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
571	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
572	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
573	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
574	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
575	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
576	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
577	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
578	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
579	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
580	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## BANKS

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
581	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
582	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
583	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
584	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
585	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
586	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
587	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
588	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
589	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
590	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
591	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
592	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
593	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
594	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
595	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## BREWERIES, PUBS &amp; REST

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
596	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
597	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
598	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
599	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
600	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
601	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
602	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
603	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
604	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
605	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
606	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
607	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
608	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
609	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
610	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## BUILDING &amp; CONSTRUCT

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
611	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
612	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
613	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
614	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
615	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
616	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
617	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
618	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
619	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
620	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
621	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
622	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
623	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
624	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
625	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## ELECTRICITY

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
626	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
627	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
628	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
629	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
630	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
631	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
632	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
633	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
634	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
635	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
636	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
637	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
638	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
639	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
640	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## ELECTRONIC &amp; ELECT

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
641	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
642	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
643	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
644	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
645	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
646	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
647	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
648	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
649	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
650	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
651	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
652	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
653	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
654	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
655	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## BUILDING MATERIALS

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
656	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
657	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
658	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
659	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
660	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
661	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
662	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
663	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
664	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
665	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
666	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
667	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
668	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
669	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
670	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## CHEMICALS

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
671	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
672	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
673	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
674	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
675	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
676	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
677	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
678	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
679	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
680	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
681	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
682	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
683	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
684	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
685	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## DISTRIBUTORS

## DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
686	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
687	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
688	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
689	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
690	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
691	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
692	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
693	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
694	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
695	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
696	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
697	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
698	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
699	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
700	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## ENGINEERING VEHICLES

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
701	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
702	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
703	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
704	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
705	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
706	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
707	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
708	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
709	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
710	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
711	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
712	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
713	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
714	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
715	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## FOOD MANUFACTURERS

1995/96	High	Low	Company	Price	Yield	P/E
716	210	200	Alfred Dunhill	210	4.5	11.5
717	210	200	Brown & Calvert	210	4.5	11.5
718	210	200	Carlsberg	210	4.5	11.5
719	210	200	Heineken	210	4.5	11.5
720	210	200	Interbrew	210	4.5	11.5
721	210	200	Kaiser Brewery	210	4.5	11.5
722	210	200	Miller Brewing	210	4.5	11.5
723	210	200	Orkla	210	4.5	11.5
724	210	200	Reckitt Benckiser	210	4.5	11.5
725	210	200	Schlitz	210	4.5	11.5
726	210	200	Tenneco	210	4.5	11.5
727	210	200	United Breweries	210	4.5	11.5
728	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
729	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5
730	210	200	Wm. S. Heileman	210	4.5	11.5

## HEALTHCARE

717	330	Deere & Co	2002	+ 8	1.8	12.5
718	325	Delta	2002	+ 1	2.8	10.5
719	325	Orion	2002	+ 2	2.8	10.4
720	325	Orion	2002	+ 2	2.8	10.4
3011	2400	Johnson W	2002	+ 3	17	10.4
3012	2400	Johnson W	2002	+ 3	17	10.4
10309	80	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	80	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	270	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	270	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
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718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
720	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
717	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
718	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
719	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
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3011	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
3012	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
10309	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
10310	165	Johnson W	1999	- 10	11	10.4
114	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
115	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
314	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
315	165	Johnson W	2002	+ 1	16	10.4
716	165	Johnson W	2002			



## Law Report March 21 1996 Court of Appeal

## Date of knowledge of tortious injury for limitation purposes

## Forbes v Wandsworth Health Authority

Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Evans and Lord Justice Roch

[Judgment March 14]  
Where a plaintiff had sustained a major injury as a result of an operation which he had expected to be successful, his date of knowledge for the purposes of sections 11 and 14 of the Limitation Act 1980 occurred as soon as he had had time to overcome the shock of the injury, take stock of his disability and seek advice.

The Court of Appeal so held by a majority (Lord Justice Roch dissenting) in a reserved judgment allowing an appeal by the defendants, Wandsworth Health Authority, from a ruling on a preliminary issue by Judge Peter Baker, QC, sitting as a judge of the Queen's Bench Division in Kingston upon Hull District Registry, in favour of the plaintiff, Nelson Vernon Dugald Forbes, who died on February 5, 1995, Jean Mavis Cecilia Forbes, his widow and personal representative, was substituted as plaintiff under rule 7 of Order 15 of the Rules of the Supreme Court, on August 2, 1995. Leave was granted to appeal to the House of Lords.

Section 11 of the 1980 Act provides: "(1) This section applies to any action for damages for negligence... where the damages claimed by the plaintiff for the negligence... consist of or include damages in respect of personal injury."

"(2) An action... shall not be

brought after the expiration of the period applicable in accordance with subsection (4)...

"(4)... the period applicable is three years from— (a) the date when the cause of action accrued; (b) the date of knowledge (if later) of the person injured."

Section 14 provides: "(1) In sections 11... of this Act references to a person's date of knowledge are references to the date on which he first had knowledge of the following facts— (a) that the injury in question was significant; and (b) that the injury was attributable in whole or in part to the act or omission which is alleged to constitute negligence."

"(3) For the purposes of this section a person's knowledge includes knowledge which he might reasonably have been expected to acquire— (a) from facts observable or ascertainable by him; or (b) from facts ascertainable by him with the help of medical or other appropriate expert advice which it is reasonable for him to seek."

Mr Martin Spencer for the defendants; Mr Christopher Limb for Mrs Forbes.

LORD JUSTICE STUART-SMITH said that the action concerned an allegation of medical negligence in relation to the treatment of Mr Forbes. The writ was issued on December 10, 1992, more than seven years after the expiry of the primary limitation period. The question whether the action was statute barred depended upon whether "the date of knowledge" of the deceased as defined in section 14 was within three years of the issue of the writ.

The judge, who in addition to the affidavit evidence, heard oral evidence from the deceased and Mrs Forbes, held that the deceased had no actual or constructive knowledge within the meaning of section 14 until he had, through his solicitors, received the advice of a vascular surgeon in October 1992. He therefore decided the issue in the deceased's favour.

The deceased was 56 when he was admitted to the defendant's hospital for a by-pass operation by Mr Gillespie on October 24, 1982. The operation was not successful and a second operation was carried out at 11.45am the next day. Unfortunately that too was not successful. The deceased was told that in order to prevent gangrene and save his life it was necessary to amputate the leg. He agreed and the operation was carried out on November 5, 1982.

The sole allegation was that it was negligent not to perform the second operation sooner. It was alleged that if Mr Gillespie had operated sooner the amputation could have been avoided.

The statement of claim did not explain why that should be so. The deceased's solicitor merely stated in his affidavit that he had obtained a report in October 1992 from an unnamed vascular surgeon and "the report concluded that the medical staff employed by the defendants delayed... in initiating action to restore the blood supply to the leg, resulting in irreversible muscle ischaemia, resulted in amputation."

It was not until 1991 that the deceased took any steps to obtain

professional advice. By that time Mrs Forbes was finding the strain of looking after the deceased increasingly arduous. The solicitor was consulted on June 26, 1991.

The judge held that the deceased had no actual knowledge because he had no reason to suspect or think that the removal of his leg was due to the act or omission of the defendants that was alleged to constitute negligence.

The negligence was said to consist of an omission to operate sooner. It was said that the delay was the cause of the injury and that delay was negligent. It was not sufficient that the deceased knew that he had lost his leg and that there was in fact a period of time between the first and second operations.

Mr Limb argued that the deceased did not even know that he was injured, within section 14(4), or that the injury was significant, within section 14(3)(a), until he had received medical advice in 1991.

However, his Lordship had no doubt that Mr Spencer was right in submitting that the injury was the amputation and that it was significant. Therefore the deceased knew of the injury and knew that it was significant at the time of the operation in 1982.

Did the deceased know prior to receipt of the opinion by the vascular surgeon in 1991 that the loss of his leg was attributable in whole or in part to the omission to operate sooner than 11.45am on October 25, 1982?

Mr Spencer submitted that all that the deceased needed to know was that there was a period of time

between the first and second operations, that the second operation was not successful and that in consequence of the second operation not being successful his leg was amputated.

His Lordship said that in many medical negligence cases the plaintiff would not know that his injury was attributable to the omission of the defendant alleged to constitute negligence in the sense that it was capable of being attributable to that omission until he was also told that the defendant had been negligent. But that did not alter the fact that there was a distinction between causation and negligence: the first was relevant to section 14(1), the second was not.

The fact that in such cases it might be necessary for the plaintiff also to know of the negligence before he could identify the omission alleged to have been negligent was nothing to the point. It did not mean that the plaintiff had to know the facts of the negligence, or that there was no actual knowledge.

As to section 14(3), it was clear that the deceased could reasonably have been expected to acquire the relevant knowledge with the help of suitable medical advice. The real question was whether it was reasonable for him to seek that advice.

One of the problems with the language of section 14(3)(b) was that two different actions might be perfectly reasonable. Thus it might be perfectly reasonable for a person who was not cured when he had hoped to be to say: "Oh well, it

is just one of those things. I expect the doctor did his best."

Alternatively, the explanation for the lack of success might be due to want of care on the part of those in whose charge he was, in which case it would be perfectly reasonable to take a second opinion. But the person was in effect making a choice, either consciously by deciding to do nothing, or unconsciously by in fact doing nothing.

Could a person who had effectively made that choice many years later, without any alteration of circumstances, change his mind and seek advice which revealed that all along he had a claim. His Lordship thought not.

It seemed to his Lordship that where, as here, the plaintiff expected that the operation would be successful and it manifestly was not, with the result that he was not subject to a shock, take stock of his grave disability and seek advice. That would take about 12 to 18 months.

Accordingly, the preliminary issue should be determined in the defendants' favour.

The judge had directed himself that the standard of reasonableness was objective but had to take into account the deceased's position, circumstances, character and character of the plaintiff.

His Lordship found difficulty with that passage. If the standard of reasonableness was objective, then the position, circumstances and character of a would-be plaintiff could not be relevant although the circumstances in which the would-be plaintiff found himself at the time it was said he should have sought expert advice would be relevant.

Nevertheless, *Nash v Eli Lilly* bound the judge and his Lordships. Because the judge had to take account of the deceased's position, circumstances and character, and because the judge saw and heard the deceased, his Lordship was not prepared to hold that the judge was clearly wrong in the conclusion he came to on the issue.

It would be unfortunate if the question asked in section 14(3)(b) were to be resolved by imputing to a would-be plaintiff an unconscious decision to do nothing and then requiring him to stand by that decision.

Such an approach would encourage those undergoing medical treatment which did not achieve the desired result to go automatically to another specialist for an opinion whether the treatment given could have been made more effective.

Solicitors: Capsticks, Putney; Heptonstall, Goole.

the observations and/or the effort to ascertain are therefore finally objective but must be qualified to take into consideration the position, circumstances, character and character of the plaintiff."

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Solicitors: Capsticks, Putney; Heptonstall, Goole.

## No right to oral Parole Board hearing

## Regina v Parole Board, Ex parte Mansell

Before Lord Justice Oton and Mr Justice Newman

[Judgment March 7]  
An offender serving a longer than normal fixed term sentence imposed under section 22(1) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 had no right to an oral hearing before the Parole Board.

The Queen's Bench Divisional Court so stated in a reserved judgment when dismissing an application for judicial review by Craig Mansell of a decision of the board dated August 9, 1995 on his suitability for parole.

On March 5, 1993 Mansell was sentenced for three indictable offences on a man five years imprisonment, half of which was imposed, pursuant to section 22(b) of the 1991 Act as over and above the sentence deemed appropriate to the seriousness of the offence, for the protection of the public.

On June 15, 1995 the Parole Board considered his case and followed its normal practice of not permitting the prisoner an oral hearing and deciding the case on the papers.

Mr Edward Fitzgerald, QC and Miss Philippa Kaufmann for Mansell; Mr Richard Jowitt for the Parole Board and the Home Secretary as interested party.

LORD JUSTICE OTTON said that sections 33 and 34 of the 1991 Act provided for parole review and it was now recognised that the bare requirements of those provisions could be supplemented where fairness required: see *R v Parole Board, Ex parte Wilson* (1992) QB 740 and *R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Doody* (1994) 1 AC 531.

Pursuant to section 32(5) the secretary of state had made the Parole Board Rules 1992, which made provision for an oral hearing by Parole Board panels. They were, however, expressed to apply only to those prisoners who were serving discretionary life sentences and to the board's consideration of their cases for release under sections 34 and 39 of the 1991 Act.

The secretary of state had made section 73 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982 provides: "(3) If the secretary of state considers it appropriate for the purpose of avoiding, mitigating or restricting the effect of noise or vibration connected with the taking-off or landing of aircraft at a designated aerodrome, to prohibit aircraft from taking-off or landing, or limit the number of occasions on which they may take off or land, at the aerodrome during certain periods, he may by a notice published in the prescribed manner... (b) specify the maximum number of occasions on which aircraft of descriptions so specified may be permitted to take off or land at the aerodrome (otherwise than as aforesaid) during periods so specified..."

Mr Richard Gordon, QC and Mr Alan Maclean for the councils; Mr Ian Burnett and Ms Dinah Rose for the secretary of state.

MR JUSTICE JOWITT said that section 73(b) was concerned with imposing limits which should not be exceeded. Having regard to the purpose of the statutory provision the use of the word "maximum" in subsection (3)(b) should be re-

garded as enlarging rather than restricting the statutory power to impose limits on the number of aircraft movements.

There was therefore power under subsection (3)(b) to impose limits both by reference to individual specified periods and to the aggregation of specified periods. The words which preceded paragraphs (a) to (c) in subsection (3) allowed the secretary of state to do all or any of the things permitted by those paragraphs. If the secretary of state decided to exercise his power under one of the paragraphs he was not obliged to exercise every aspect of the power created by that paragraph. There was no reason why the restriction should be read so restrictively.

It was submitted that the decision was unlawful because although it set a permitted noise level for 1993-1998 less than the level permitted for the preceding period 1988-1993, the effect was to allow more noise than was previously experienced in summer 1988.

It was clear that the power under section 73(b) could only be used for the purpose of avoiding, limiting

necessary to protect the public from serious harm. In other words Parliament had specifically imposed upon the sentence the responsibility to carry out what Mr Jay termed a prospective exercise.

Moreover, by section 22(b) of the test for the sentencing court was whether the term was necessary to protect the public from serious harm from the offender. That was not the same requirement as in section 34(4)(b) in which the statutory test for the Parole Board was whether "it is no longer necessary for the protection of the public that the prisoner should be confined."

Thus it did not follow that once the first part of a section 22(b) sentence, if identified, had expired there was a right to be released if he was no longer a risk. Thus, in his Lordship's judgment, the sentence under section 22(b) was conceptually different from a discretionary life sentence, nor was it a hybrid sentence.

The judge fixed the whole of the length of the sentence under section 22(b) and that placed the sentence in the same category as any other fixed term sentence. Consequently the section 22(b) prisoner was in the same position as any other determinate prisoner.

There was no special provision in section 33 or section 35 for persons serving determinate sentences within section 22(b). Thus a person sentenced under section 22(b) to five years which the court considered was commensurate with the seriousness of the offence and a person sentenced under section 22(b) for a violent or sexual offence to a longer term of five years because the court considered it necessary to protect the public from serious harm, had the same right to be considered by the board at the end of two and a half years.

In his Lordship's view, if Parliament had intended to impose on the board a specific duty to decide on the length of the preventive period in the case of a determinate sentence with a section 22(b) element or to deal with such a sentence "as if it were a discretionary life sentence" it could have done so and Parliament must be taken to have intended not to impose such a duty.

On that analysis, his Lordship was unable to spell out a right of a section 22(b) prisoner to a right to an oral hearing before the board as a matter of fairness. It would be open to the court to do so where the statute was silent or ambivalent or that natural justice so required.

In his Lordship's view, the statute was unambiguously silent, there was no ambivalence and he did not consider natural justice did so require.

Moreover, to grant exceptionally a right to an oral hearing to a section 22(b) prisoner and not to extend it to other determinate prisoners would be both illogical and result in a sense of injustice for the latter category.

Discretionary life prisoners were a unique category, along with those detained during Her Majesty's pleasure following the decision of the European Court of Human Rights in *Hussain v UK* (1995) 20 EHRR 1 (The Times February 26, 1996).

The secretary of state had recognised that more than normal fairness required an oral hearing for such prisoners and in order to bring the UK in line with their obligations arising out of article 5(4) of the European Convention on Human Rights (1953, Cmd 8969).

The section 22(b) prisoner was not in the same category. There was no reason why parity of logic or fairness the common law should create a right to a section 22(b) prisoner which was a special right of the discretionary life prisoner.

His Lordship was satisfied that the process by which a prisoner was permitted to state his case to the Parole Board as a whole afforded him a sufficient and fair opportunity to put his case. It was not in any event open to contend before the court that the Board had acted in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights: see *R v Secretary of State for the Home Department, Ex parte Brind* (1991) 1 AC 698.

Mr Justice Newman agreed.

Solicitors: Paul Rooney & Co, Liverpool; Treasury Solicitor.

## Office use precludes industrial allowance

## Girobank plc v Clarke (Inspector of Taxes)

Before Mr Justice Lindsay

[Judgment March 4]  
For corporation tax purposes, expenditure of £7.1 million on a modern building designed and constructed as a document and data processing centre did not qualify for an allowance under the provisions of section 18 of the Capital Allowances Act 1990. Although the building was an "industrial building or structure" as defined in section 18(1)(e) of the Act it was not an "office" within the meaning of section 18(4) and was thus excluded from the definition.

Mr Justice Lindsay so held in a reserved judgment in the Chancery Division dismissing an appeal, but for different reasons, by the taxpayer company, Girobank plc, from a determination of Mr M. J. F. Palmer, a deputy special commissioner, upholding in principle an assessment to corporation tax for the period to December 31, 1991.

The allowance was given for expenditure on industrial buildings or structures defined in section 18(1)(e) of the 1990 Act as including buildings in use "for the purposes of a trade which consists in the manufacture of goods or materials or the subject of goods or materials to any process".

Section 18(4) excluded from that definition "any building or structure in use as an office, or as a dwelling house, retail shop, showroom, hotel or office..."

Mr Peter Whitehead, QC, who did not appear below, for the company; Mr Timothy Brennan for the Crown.

MR JUSTICE LINDSAY said that the building, the Wigan Centre, contained 64,500 square feet of operational processing space used by Girobank for its highly organised system for the prompt delivery to it from a countrywide network of post offices of the paperwork created to record cash and other credits deposited every day with Post Office Girobank. It was a highly mechanised method of quickly processing that paperwork. The work was done with the assistance of a large number of special purpose machines.

These documents were read visually, sorted into baskets, clips and stapled and then the data were encoded with magnetically readable print and recorded on disc and tape. Some 340 personnel were employed at the centre.

Plainly the words "goods or materials" in section 18(1)(e) had to be given a meaning broad enough to cover both those manufactured and those subjected to a process short of or different from manufacture. Moreover, "materials" could not consist wholly of raw materials as the subsection contemplated

materials which had been manufactured.

The Crown, relying on *Kilmarnock Equitable Cooperative Building Society Ltd v IRC* (1966) 42 TC 675 and *Vibroplant Ltd v Holland* (1981) 1 All ER 528, argued that there was at the centre no production of a relevant process because to satisfy section 18(1)(e) it was "goods or materials" rather than information that had to be processed, the process had to be of an industrial character and had to be such that the goods or materials were thereby altered.

But those authorities gave no support for a process having necessarily to alter the goods or materials in issue nor that the process should be "industrial". Mr Whitehead had further authority on the point: *Buckingham v Securitas Properties Ltd* (1980) 1 WLR 330.

Drawing together the legislation and the authorities, there was nothing to limit the very broad width of the words "any process" to those of an "industrial" character. Nor was it required of a process that it altered the goods and materials subjected to it in any way.

Moreover, there was no requirement of a process that it should be done with a view to a sale of the goods, provided that the process completed a substantial measure of uniformity of treatment or system of treatment.

His Lordship added the following guidance for local authorities faced with the prospect of officials being held personally liable.

Had there been evidence from the chief executive, or some other senior officer, that the authority had been undergoing severe shortages, either financial or managerial, or that at the time the staffing of the department was similarly depleted because of resignations or ill health, the court would have had to weigh those matters in the balance before concluding that the individual officer responsible for dealing with the case had been irresponsible or negligent or had acted unreasonably. If such evidence were adduced the blame would lie elsewhere than with the staff.

Solicitors: Fisher Meredith, Clapham; Mr David Tatlow, Lambeth.

In the light of the facts the paper, having arrived at the centre, was subjected to the processes described and section 18(1)(e) was satisfied.

Was, then, the centre an "office" within section 18(4) of the Act? There was no direct authority on the meaning of the word. In *IRC v Lambhill Ironworks Ltd* (1950) 31 TC 393 Lord Cooper, Lord President, said that one had to look at the building as a whole and by reference to its predominant purposes or use.

The data processing centre was where the speedy processing of paperwork and the adding of information to it took place. Many of the machines sat at keyboards. The employees, under the guidance of their operators, performed functions that in the past were performed manually by clerks. On the facts there was ample evidence to support a finding that the centre was an office and thus excluded from the section 18(1)(e) definition.

Girobank had given notice seeking to raise a new point not put to the commissioner: whether the centre came within section 18(1)(e) of the Act as being a "mill... or other similar premises".

The company could not do so in the circumstances: he was allowed to raise that new point and even if it had been allowed to do so it would not have succeeded on it.

Solicitors: Mr G. A. Morgan, Howe; Solicitor of Inland Revenue.

Second, if so, did such conduct cause the applicant to incur unnecessary costs?

Third, if so, was it, in all the circumstances, just to order the person to compensate the applicant for the whole or part of the relevant costs.

On the facts, there was no clearer case on the satisfaction of the criteria.

His Lordship added the following guidance for local authorities faced with the prospect of officials being held personally liable.

Had there been evidence from the chief executive, or some other senior officer, that the authority had been undergoing severe shortages, either financial or managerial, or that at the time the staffing of the department was similarly depleted because of resignations or ill health, the court would have had to weigh those matters in the balance before concluding that the individual officer responsible for dealing with the case had been irresponsible or negligent or had acted unreasonably. If such evidence were adduced the blame would lie elsewhere than with the staff.

Solicitors: Fisher Meredith, Clapham; Mr David Tatlow, Lambeth.

## Council officers personally liable for costs

## Regina v Lambeth London Borough Council, Ex parte Wilson

Before Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC

[Judgment February 28]  
Individual officers of a local authority dealing with a homeless person's case were personally liable for wasted costs arising from fact that the authority's decision not to contest a challenge by judicial review was made only at the eleventh hour.

Sir Louis Blom-Cooper, QC, sitting as a deputy judge in the Queen's Bench Division, gave judgment when adjudicating on an application for costs against Lambeth. His Lordship had earlier granted Donna Wilson's application to quash the authority's decision that the accommodation offered to her was suitable.

Mr Terence Gallivan for Ms Wilson; Mr Michael Maguire for the local authority.

HIS LORDSHIP said that two issues arose: whether, and in what circumstances, the court had power to make an order for costs against individual officers of a respondent local authority who were not parties to the proceedings; and if the power existed,

whether it should be exercised in the present case.

The wasted costs procedure was introduced by section 4 of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990, amending section 51 of the Supreme Court Act 1981.

Section 51(3) of the 1981 Act had been interpreted liberally to enable costs to be paid other than by a party to the proceedings, albeit by a person who would necessarily have some connection with the proceedings: see *Aiden Shipping Co Ltd v Interbulk Ltd* (1986) 1 AC 965, 980B. On that basis, officers working in the housing department of the authority would appear to qualify.

In *Symphony Group plc v Hodgson* (1994) QB 179 the Court of Appeal reviewed the case law in which the court had been prepared to order a non-party to pay costs.

One of the persons identified was the person who had management responsibility for the party's operation, for example, the director of an insolvent company who caused the company improperly to prosecute or defend proceedings. The court had been reluctant to make such an order against a non-party who was not a legal representative for the purposes of the wasted costs jurisdiction in section

51(3) did not prevent his being ordered to pay costs under the court's general power under section 51(3).

His Lordship accepted Mr Gallivan's submission that the authority was a statutory corporation: see *Hazell v Hammonds & Lambeth London Borough Council* (1992) 2 AC 1, 4D-E. Its legal status was, therefore, analogous to that of a company incorporated under the Companies Acts.

Mr Gallivan further submitted that, per Lord Justice Balcombe in *Symphony Group plc* the court might order costs against a non-party company director where the latter failed to give any credible answer to the basis on which proceedings should be conducted and had behaved irresponsibly.

As to when the exceptional power should be applied, his Lordship adopted the approach in *Ridehalgh v Horsefield* (1994) Ch 205, in respect of the exercise of the power under section 51(6). The three-stage process could be framed as follows:

First, had the person of whom complaint was made acted improperly, unreasonably or negligently?

For his part, his Lordship found it unnecessary to decide whether that submission was correct or not. That was not because it was unarguable. One could doubtless have an interesting debate as to how far a company entitled to exercise such rights could, in theory at least, exercise them through individuals acting as its duly appointed officers or agents.

It was because the submission missed the main point of the issue, which was whether the sharing arrangements, notwithstanding that they might not for the time being be exercised, nevertheless remained exercisable.

In answering that question, which went to the heart of the case, his Lordship would be prepared to assume in favour of the tenant, that it was indeed the case that for so long as the landlord under a tenancy of such a kind happened to be a limited company it would be impossible for the landlord, because of the disabilities imposed by its corporate status, to exercise its rights in the kitchen.

If by no means followed, however, that those rights had become forfeited. They were merely in abeyance. Landlords came and went. The reversal might change hands and if it passed to an individual again, it would once again become possible and prac-

ticable for the rights of kitchen use to become common rights.

The position was no different from that which obtained when the landlord whose kitchen the tenant was entitled to share was an individual who became permanently or temporarily incapacitated through illness or infirmity from exercising the functions of common kitchen use.

There was in both cases a full in the day-to-day exercise by the landlord of the rights of user of his kitchen, matched by a corresponding full in the liability of the tenant to have his own use of the kitchen disturbed by the landlord. But what mattered was not whether rights were in fact being exercised, but whether they were there to be exercised as and when the party entitled to them was capable of doing so.

The fact that at the date of the commencement of the possession proceedings the tenant was enjoying a free run of the kitchen which had once belonged to the chief but now belonged to the company therefore availed him nothing. The judge was correct to hold that the landlord's continuing right prevented the premises from qualifying as "premises let as a separate dwelling" under section 1 and that they were therefore outside the protection of the 1977 Act.

Lord Justice Millett and Lord Justice Thorpe agreed.

Solicitors: Hodders, Willesden; Berensons, South Kensington.

## European Law Report

## Luxembourg

## Transfer of undertaking

## Merckx and Another v Ford Motors Co Belgium SA

Joined Cases C-171/94 and C-172/94

There was a transfer of an undertaking where a business holding a motor vehicle dealership for a particular territory discontinued its activities and the dealership was then transferred to another business which took on part of the staff and was recommended to customers, without any transfer of assets.

The Court of Justice of the European Communities (Sixth Chamber) so held on March 7, giving a preliminary ruling under article 177 of the EC Treaty on

references dated June 15, 1994 by the Cour du Travail, Brussels, on a question of interpretation of Council Directive 77/187/EEC of February 14, 1977 on the approximation of the laws of the member states relating to the safeguarding of employees' rights in the event of transfer of undertakings, businesses or parts of businesses (OJ 1977 L61 p26).

The Court said that in the light of the principles in Case C-29/91 *Dr Sophie Redmond Stichting v Bartol* (1992) ECR I-3189, and the circumstances taken as a whole, article 1(1) of the directive, which provided that the directive was to apply to "the transfer of





FILM 1

A slick commercial package, yes, but Disney's new *Toy Story* also proves to be delightful



FILM 2

Vietnam's urban nightmare is pretentiously treated in Tran Anh Hung's latest, *Cyclo*

THE TIMES ARTS



FILM 3

Its heart may be in the right place, but miscalculated whimsy mars the gay satire of Jeffrey



TOMORROW

How does Richard O'Brien fare in *Disgracefully Yours*? Benedict Nightingale gives his verdict

CINEMA: The stars of *Toy Story* may come from a computer, says Geoff Brown, but the emotions are definitely human

# Laugh, cry, buy the doll

Looked at from one angle, *Toy Story* could be taken as the ultimate expression of dehumanised cinema. This is an animated film, but nobody picked up a pencil or brush to create the images seen on screen: instead they sat pressing keys or pushing a mouse. It was all done by computer. And, with its cast of toys, the film, produced for the Disney empire, is a merchandiser's dream. What child would not crave their very own Woody, the endearing cowboy marionette voiced by Tom Hanks, or the bumptious space ranger Buzz Lightyear, with his folding wings and push button-operated laser beams?

*Toy Story* is a slick commercial package, but it is not soulless. John Lasseter's Pixar Animation Studios, practised in shorts such as the Oscar-winning *Tin Toy*, uses its first feature for something beyond technical stunts. It has a story to tell — a parable, almost, about belonging and friendship — and it crams the drama with comedy, chases, thrills, spills and recognisable human emotions.

It also manages to keep every age group entertained. When we hear that the toys hold "plastic erosion awareness" meetings, adults will probably laugh. The more cynical kids, meanwhile, may appreciate Sid, the delinquent child across the street, who cannibalises toys to create bizarre mutants. Simpler souls may enjoy Hamm, the know-all piggybank, Slinky the dog or the platoon of Green Army Men, ready for deployment at any emergency.

The film begins with Andy, a six-year-old boy, playing with his toys, especially Woody, an old-fashioned cowboy whose voice box contains a few choice phrases, such as "You're my favourite deputy" and "Somebody's poisoned the

**Toy Story**  
Odeon Leicester Square  
PG, 81 mins  
A computer-animated delight

**Cyclo**  
MGM Swiss Centre  
18, 129 mins  
Life is hell in Ho Chi Minh City

**Jeffrey**  
MGM Shaftesbury Ave  
18, 92 mins  
Well-intentioned but arch gay comedy

**Rhythm Thief**  
Prince Charles  
18, 94 mins  
No-budget grunge from New York

waterhole". But the story begins once Andy leaves and the toys come to life to argue, frolic and express their big fear: the fear of being replaced by a new toy. Andy's birthday brings Buzz Lightyear, who immediately becomes his favourite. To add to Woody's irritation, bumptious Buzz (voiced by Tim Allen) believes he is a real space ranger, not a toy, a notion knocked from his noodle during adventures in the dangerous world outside Andy's room.

The film's look is amazing. The camera darts and swoops over settings with the sleek, sharp contours of super-realist paintings or Charles Sheeler's industrial landscapes. Detail is pared down, but precise: note the scuffs and scratches on the skirting board around Andy's room. Some of the toys remain one-joke objects, but Woody and Buzz grow in stature, and their progress from enmity to friendship is entirely convincing. Hanks and Allen's voices play a key part in the humanising pro-

cess, but the pair would not come to life as they do without the range of expressions on their three-dimensional faces. Although the credits list the names of five dogs used for "live action dog reference", no mention is made of the veteran actors who must, in part, have inspired Buzz and Woody: Buzz resembles a chunky Kirk Douglas, while Woody's gosh-darn lanky face suggests the young James Stewart.

The credits also list a "digital massage therapist". The mind boggles. But whatever unfathomable technology brought *Toy Story* into being, the completed film is delightfully user-friendly.

Admirers of *The Scent of Green Papaya* may be taken aback by *Cyclo*, the brazen, uncomfortable second feature from the Vietnamese-born director Tran Anh Hung. Gone is the poised, immaculate, artificial look of the streets and rooms of period Saigon, recreated in a Paris studio. Instead, Tran huris us into the real-life bustle of contemporary Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), with its teeming streets, incessant noise and lurking violence. At some points the camera sweeps around grandly in a social-realist mode, taking in housing facades and traffic before eventually landing on the key character or action.

Elsewhere, the camera moves in tightly for a cryptic, surrealist image: an insect crawling along a lip, a face doused with paint or a jet of blood spurting from a knifed neck. But whatever the camera does, it shows off.

The film's ostentation grows apace as the narrative disintegrates. The basic thread of Tran's script is simple. Le Van Loc, the young hero — nobody is given a name — drives a cyclo (a bicycle rickshaw),



Soon to be seen on a Christmas list near you, Woody the cowboy and Buzz Lightyear the astronaut square off in Disney's dazzling *Toy Story*

ferrying passengers through the clogged streets. While he is attending a call of nature, his vehicle is stolen; to recoup its cost he falls in with a criminal gang run by the Poet (Tony Leung), a brooding figure who also serves as pimp for the hero's slater. But the further the cyclo driver delves into crime, the more oblique the director's approach becomes; and the pursuit of startling images, costs old-fashioned things such as motivation and character development.

The film's visceral impact is astonishing: this is *Train-Spotting* for the art houses. *Cyclo* may also reward attention as a despairing portrait of Vietnam's urban hell from an outside observer (Tran moved

to France at the age of 12). But there comes a point after so much mingling of beauty and horror, so much noise and blood, so many artful shots of lizards and fish where you cannot be dazzled anymore: you want a film with a human face. *Cyclo* does not have one.

"Hate AIDS, not life," is the message thumped out in Jeffrey (see feature below). It is an uplifting message to be sure, although its delivery is heavy-handed. On the stage, Paul Rudnick's play was by all accounts a merry carnival of sketches, barbs and gay variations on romantic-comedy conventions; but this transfer to film, under the aegis of its New York stage director, Christopher Ashley, signals the party's end.

Jeffrey, played by Steve Weber, is an arch ditherer. For safety's sake, he decides to avoid sex; then Steve comes along, the man of his dreams. Should he commit? To fill the gaps while he makes up his mind, Rudnick and Ashley offer fantasy sequences with Mother Teresa, a television quiz show called *It's Just Sex*, a dreadful cameo from Sigourney Weaver as a New Age evangelist, and lots of banter with Patrick Stewart's flamboyant interior designer. At best you get the odd biting line of dialogue. At worst you suffer arch whimsy, tired gag stereotypes and grotesque

miscalculations, such as the sudden cut to popcorn munchers watching the film in a cinema, gulping at a passionate gay kiss.

Jeffrey has its heart in the right place, but the issues at stake — life, death, happiness — are just too important for audiences to swallow its faults with a smile.

Appearing briefly at the Prince Charles cinema before its debut next week on video, *Rhythm Thief* flings the viewer down on New York's Lower East Side for a grainy, downbeat and exasperating 90 minutes. The company includes a seller of bootleg punk rock cassettes who eats peanut butter with a screwdriver; a loopy girl who has her mother's poetry written on her arms; and a fast-talking dude who seems to be auditioning to be Quentin Tarantino.

Surprisingly, the film brought Matthew Harrison the Best Director prize at the Sundance festival last year. He has energy and resilience in plenty: he shot all the footage in ten days at a cost of \$10,000. But the film's gloomy posturing soon sends it down a cul-de-sac and Harrison's assumption that frenetic, hand-held, black-and-white camerawork equals real life needs to be questioned. In this case, it equals irritation.

## 'Refreshingly simple'

Every week young film fans discuss new releases ...

**TOY STORY**  
Jenny Dawson, 20: I was laughing all the way through. This is a definite must-see: you don't need to be a kid.

Lizanne Rose, 22: Amusing, but definitely for the under-12s.

Suzie Gilbert, 18: I preferred this to the normal Disney animations — much more light-hearted and it looked refreshingly simple. However, I think it's something you are more likely to watch on the TV on Christmas Day than pay money to see.

Stuart Fennegan, 19: Excellent. The plot was good — more than just an excuse to have an animated story.

**RHYTHM THIEF**  
Jenny: It was very difficult to get involved in this; I felt nothing for the main character. But it was watchable enough as its style was so different to the normal Hollywood genre.

Lizanne: This is probably the worst film I've seen in a long time. The director used every possible camera technique to compensate for a poor script and weak acting.

Stuart: I found this very strange; I started not liking it, but it grew on me. I liked the camera techniques, but the acting was truly awful.



Suzie: It wouldn't be fair to look for wham-bam action in this film as it is more an exploration of the male character. This takes time, so some of the scenes are sluggish, but overall it works well.

**JEFFREY**  
Suzie: This reminded me of those terrible Eighties American comedies. This was supposed to break stereotypes about gay men, but it ended up reinforcing them.

Stuart: It was fairly amusing, but I wouldn't tell anybody to expect too much.

Jenny: I was so bored it even made *Rhythm Thief* look good.

Lizanne: The plot is simple and predictable, but the love/twist dilemma of Jeffrey is consistently funny. It manages to neither over-sentimentalise nor trivialise the subject.

## Pounding the pink drum

The love that dared not speak its name now proudly proclaims it in mainstream movies. Christopher Ashley's *Jeffrey* is one of 20 feature films made in the past year which are showing in the tenth London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, opening tonight.

Since Tom Hanks played in *Philadelphia*, leading stars are much less nervous about appearing as sexual non-conformists. Eric Roberts plays a homosexual defiantly facing death from AIDS in *It's My Party*, directed by Randal Kleiser, who made *Grease*, and with a supporting cast

Mainstream acceptance has led to a plethora of films on gay and lesbian topics. David Robinson reports

including Olivia Newton-John, Roddy MacDowell and George Segal. Paul Mercurio, from *Strictly Ballroom*, appears in Charles Winkler's *Ribbon Blues*, a comedy about politically correct gay criminals pitted against pharmaceutical corporations profiteering from AIDS drugs.

Though most of the films are British or American, a few come from further afield.

Ryosuke Hashiguchi's *Like Grains of Sand* is an anguished and touching two-hour saga of repressed passion in a Japanese boy's high school. Yee Chih Yen's cheerful comedy of sexual entanglements, *Lonely Hearts Club*, comes from Taiwan. The most exotic entry, though, is Shantana Sarkis's *Life is a Woman*, depicting lesbian love in a Kazakhstan prison.

Generally, the film-makers in this year's festival appear less constrained than in the past by the need to make propaganda. Sexual orientation is now secondary to a good story. Even the most mythical moment in gay political history, the 1969 Stonewall riots, becomes the background for personal histories in the late Nigel Finch's *Stonewall*.

The long odyssey to this sexual liberation is related in *The Celluloid Closet*, directed by Jeffrey Friedman and Rob Epstein. The commercial success of a 1961 English film, Basil Dearden's *Victim*, in which Dirk Bogarde — with astounding courage for the time — played a homosexual, first opened the doors. For a long time, though, the fate of screen homosexuals (unless they were "sissy" character comics) was invariably last-reel death. A macabre high point of *The Celluloid Closet* is a montage holocaust of the violent deaths of Hollywood screen homosexuals.

The breakthrough came in the Seventies. *The Boys in the Band* may have been tormented, but at least they stayed alive; and *Cabaret* presented its homosexual hero (Michael York) without fuss or comment.

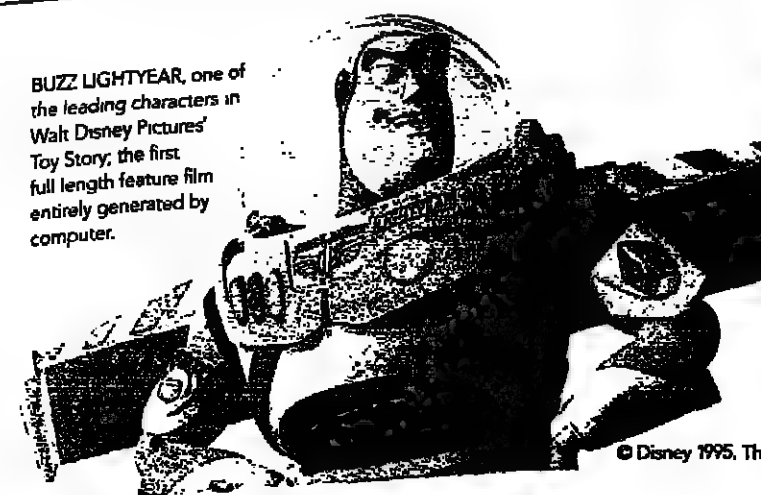
Although shot in America, *The Celluloid Closet* was produced by Channel 4, which will screen it on television later in the year.

© The London Lesbian & Gay Film Festival begins tonight at the National Film Theatre, South Bank, SE1 (071-928 3232)

NEXT THURSDAY

THE TIMES SCREEN WRITING COMPETITION

How to enter The Times Screenwriting Competition and win a trip to Hollywood to pitch your idea for a film to five leading studios



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THE NETWORK IS THE COMPUTER







## DANCE

English National Ballet's Alice heralds the start of a new dance era at the Coliseum



## THEATRE 1

The seedy side of Cardiff is explored at the Donmar in *Song from a Forgotten City*

## THE TIMES ARTS

## THEATRE 2

You name it, we'll prove it: Modern Problems in Science apply a touch of the comic to the cosmic

## MUSIC

In Birmingham, an entertaining evening of Stockhausen and the rest of the Fifties crowd

# It's not a house, it's a home

DANCE: The future looks brighter for English National Ballet after its new deal with the Coliseum. Debra Craine reports

Derek Deane must have been feeling pretty pleased with himself on Tuesday night. His new Alice in Wonderland was making its London premiere in a royal gala performance attended by the Princess of Wales, while his company, English National Ballet, was back in the theatre it wants to call home.

When Deane took over as artistic director in 1993 he said that one of his priorities was to find a proper showcase for ENB in London, and he was determined that would be the Coliseum. It would not be easy: relations between English National Ballet and English National Opera — the Coliseum's landlords — had been unsettled for some time and ENB seasons at the Coliseum were patchy. But this week Deane has an agreement in his pocket that will see ENB taking up an annual Christmas residence at the Coliseum.

What this means is that after more than 45 years, ENB is severing its ties with the Festival Hall, which has provided a home for the company's Nutcrackers in London since 1950. While this may not be good news for the South Bank, it is good news for dancers and public alike. Festival Hall has never been an ideal venue for dance — it was designed as a concert hall, after all — and ENB's productions have never looked right there in the makeshift proscenium arch. The Coliseum, meanwhile, is the choicest dance space in the capital. No wonder the dancers were beaming when Deane told them the news.

There will be one final Nutcracker season at the Festival Hall this

Christmas. After that, ENB will take up residence across the river and Deane will mark the move by choreographing a new production of *Nutcracker* for December 1997. With five weeks at its disposal in the Coliseum every year, ENB can also show London its other large-scale ballets at Christmas. And that's not all. New links between ENB and ENO have been forged: there is even talk of possible artistic collaborations between the two companies.

So, the future was looking rosy on

## Alice in Wonderland Coliseum

Tuesday. If only the same could be said for the ballet taking place on stage. Deane's *Alice* was reviewed at its premiere in Southampton last October and its weaknesses pointed out then. A second viewing does not convince me that it has more to offer than some exceptionally pretty designs by Sue Blane, great stage effects by Blane and the illusionist Paul Kieve, and the familiarity of Lewis Carroll's eccentric, anthropomorphic creatures.

The music, a hotchpotch of Tchaikovsky sources arranged by Carl Davis, does not stand up dramatically, even though David Coleman worked hard in the pit at whipping up some kind of motive power. And without a musical framework that develops a theme and embellishes an emotional base, Deane's work as a choreographer is already doomed. Alice (played enthusiastically by

Alice Crawford) is more like an observer than a ballet heroine. She watches as the weird cast list parades before her: the White Rabbit, Caterpillar, Cheshire Cat, Mad Hatter and the Dormouse (a perky Marta Barahona) and the rest. None of them has enough interesting choreography to do more with their roles than mug and mime: a superficial reading is all they can hope for. Still, it is good to see English National Ballet back in the Coliseum for a run. Michael Corder's *Cinderella* gets its London bow next week, so, too, does Deane's updated *Giselle* (performed with Balanchine's *Square Dance*).

At long last the Coliseum appears to be becoming more dance-friendly. As well as taking in ENB on a regular basis, English National Opera will soon announce a Handel co-production with the Mark Morris Dance Group as part of its own 1996-97 season.

The theatre will also provide a summer home for the Royal Ballet during the closure of Covent Garden. Indeed, the closure of the Royal Opera House gives the Coliseum a golden opportunity to establish itself as the major dance house in London.

Meanwhile, an ENO feasibility study team is asking Coliseum audiences for their views on a future home for ENO and large-scale dance in London. It seems clear that whatever ENO plans for the Coliseum — which desperately needs refurbishment — dance will remain part of its thinking.



Alice Crawford as the heroine in Derek Deane's production of *Alice in Wonderland*, which received its London premiere in a royal gala performance at the Coliseum on Tuesday night

## RADIO

## Read between the lines

The old order changeth. While the nation has been preoccupied with the line print of Peter Hobday's contract at *Today* on Radio 4, Classic FM, far from rubbing its hands, has been gnashing its teeth.

Breakfast radio is always the focus of attention, for this is the time of day when radio comes into its own. So the Hobday hoo-haa has obscured the publicity from Classic for its first change of breakfast presenter since the station was launched four years ago.

On Monday Mike Read, former Radio 1 presenter, took over the slot from Nick Bailey, who is said to have had enough of the early rising. There is also a perception at Classic that a larger share of the breakfast audience is there for the taking and that Read could be the man to take it.

Read comes into the show with the audience curve on the rise, in contrast to most breakfast programmes. Those on Radios 2 and 3 have dropped over the past year, while *Today's* is holding. Bailey, by contrast, has increased his listening figure to 314,000, three times that for Radio 3.

The figures would be of less interest if breakfast shows were self-contained in audience terms, as happens with television at that hour. But anything Classic can do to improve the breakfast audience is good news for Henry Kelly and bad news for Radio 3.

Kelly comes to the microphone at 9am on Classic. It has become a rule of the audience research that whatever figure Classic's breakfast show is attracting, it increases by between 40,000 and 55,000 with the arrival of Kelly. By 10am each day, Kelly is attracting Classic's highest audience of the week.

Ergo, more for Read equals more for Kelly. This explains why Radio 3 put Paul Gambaccini head-to-head with Kelly. There is no evidence as to whether this has worked, but BBC research suggests "very high awareness" for Gambaccini.

Whether that translates into higher numbers remains to be seen, but Kelly v Gambaccini is shaping into a contest as significant as anything happening over breakfast.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

PETER BARNARD

THEATRE: High-voltage imagination from a Welsh dramatist; plus, masters of improvisation

## No doubting Thomas

IF YOU think Edward Thomas was a First World War poet who wrote quirky verse about the Wiltshire countryside, you will be mightily surprised by the dramatist of the same name currently represented in Covent Garden. He lives in South Wales, founded a theatre company called Y Cwmni in 1988, and has more in common with Sam Shepard and the Irvine Welsh of *Trainspotting* than with A.E. Housman or Wilfred Owen.

This Edward Thomas's

*Song from a Forgotten City* is a surreal play about the trials of being Welsh, with a tormented, drugged-out writer as its main character.

### Song from a Forgotten City Donmar Warehouse

That summary is unlikely to lure Londoners in hordes to the latest arrival in the Donmar's "Four Corners" season. But I suspect that this will not vastly surprise Thomas nor send him into storms of resentment at Anglo insularity. He himself feels that Wales is the British Isles' forgotten corner and, though he laments its sidelining in vivid, even violent style, he does not act the victim nor

offload the blame. Indeed, the play comes across as a co-operated attempt to shake, rattle and roll his compatriots out of their own enervated, enervating habits.

Though it took me time to succumb to his idiom, I came to feel he was fulfilling this task in the best way possible: by displaying a high-voltage imagination. He pulls us into a lurid, sinister world where, as the writer-protagonist says, it isn't clear "where my life ends and my blur begins". The stage furniture consists of a toilet bowl, crushed Coke cans, cages filled with urban detritus, towering pipes, neon lights. At times this represents



Patrick Brennan, Jack James and Russell Gomer in Edward Thomas's surreal *Song from a Forgotten City*

the streets of Cardiff, a rundown hotel where the night porter wears a frock coat and a plastic skirt, the flat where the writer smokes cocaine, and his own disorientated head.

Though characters merge into each other, and some events are hallucinated, the drift is clear. After all, you don't need a Dada phrasebook to interpret the scene in which a sneering publisher urges Carlyle (as the writer is called) to pen saleable pastoral, only to get his head shoved in the lavatory in reprisal. Neither the protagonist nor his author are into nostalgia. Quite the contrary. "I came to the city in search of a metropolis," says Carlyle, "and I found only Cardiff."

Feeling as he does that "without a city you can't have

a country", he is preoccupied with the urban future, not any rural past. Though the dialogue free-associates this way and that, taking in everything from Barbie dolls to dentistry to car crashes, it is never more passionate than when Carlyle imagines taking a taxi-ride through streets that buzz with human excitement.

Sometimes the humour gets facetious — shirts plastered with "World of DIY" — but the invention and energy don't flag. Nor do Patrick Brennan, Jack James and Russell Gomer, a three-man cast who ably perform the work of ten. If Cardiff remains Cardiff, and Wales Wales, it won't be Y Cwmni's fault.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

## Winning formula

Modern Problems in Science  
Bloomsbury

NEVER mind the scientific problems, what about those of the reviewer setting out to write about this constantly changing show?

The three performers are an improvisational group who have developed their own original and lunatic version. Science is their area, and a spacious enough one to contain any discipline that sounds as if it can be taught at college. The audience yells out an unlikely proposition which the "professors" then proceed to prove, in terms of the academic specialities chosen for them.

On their opening night — and they are only here until Saturday — a woman required them to demonstrate that she was not really there. Dick Costello did so in terms of medicine. Rich Pulcher relied on his suddenly life-long experience of oceanography, and Phil Granchi drew out a proof derived from taxidermy.

After the interval we were asked to come up with a demonstrably true statement, whereupon they proved the opposite, ie that triangles do

not have three sides. Tomorrow the questions will have altered, and I suppose it is just possible that one evening they will be given a proposition that defeats them. But somehow I doubt it, for they are experts in shifting goal posts.

Part of the show's appeal, to the largely student audience, may be that it mocks the procedures of the academic world. Ultimately, it is not so useful to establish that bungee-jumping failed to flourish in ancient Egypt because they only had the pyramids to jump off and kept killing themselves on the slopes. But lateral thinking is infectious, and who can foretell what stimulus the show might have upon university studies: "Impro shows led to the cure for cancer — discuss."

JEREMY KINGSTON

## Uncaged and unconstrained

## CONCERT

BCMG/Harding  
Birmingham

too was the weight, especially the weight of silence, enough to make the piece not just wonderful but also, as it should be, a little frightening.

PAUL GRIFFITHS

PETER BARNARD

## Elvis lives

### THE TIMES THEATRE CLUB

tors playing Elvis at the various stages of his life. Alexander Bar makes his West End debut as the young Elvis, and his life before stardom. Tim Whitnall plays the Elvis of the late Fifties and Sixties, when he was unrivalled as the pop idol of a generation. Finally, P.J. Proby, something of a rock icon in his own right, portrays Elvis in his later, Las Vegas, years.

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COVENTRY  
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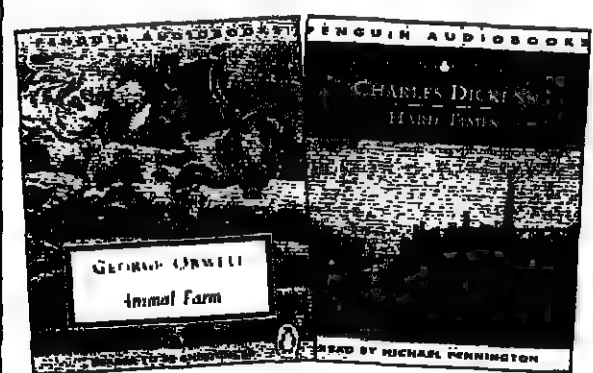
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MILFORD HAVEN  
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April 9

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## THE TIMES Complimentary Audiobooks



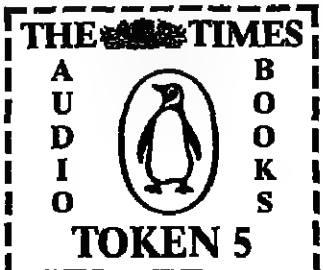
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TOKEN 5



Robert Skidelsky on the power of victimhood

# Thoughtfully challenged

Consider the case of extremely short persons (ESPs), previously known as dwarfs. Research reveals that they are seriously under-represented in higher-paid jobs. A spokesperson attributes this to "heightism", or prejudice against ESps. To counter heightism, school curricula should be rewritten to emphasise the contributions of ESps to human progress, discrimination on grounds of height made illegal, and positive discrimination policies in favour of ESps instituted.

This fantasy — as it still just is — captures the flavour of the arguments put forward for the "liberation" of women, blacks, and gays and lesbians in this lively, if uneven, collection of essays. These arguments go well beyond the historic demand for equal rights, now conceded in all civilised societies. The case for the "liberation" of particular groups rests on the proposition that our societies are so impregnated with sexism, racism, or homophobic prejudices that members of the groups against whom these prejudices are directed are entitled to special support in the exercise of their legal rights (for example, through laws forbidding discrimination in housing and employment, or enjoining the teaching of homosexuality in schools), and/or to additional rights which apply only to members of the oppressed group — for example, job quotas for women and for blacks.

Arguments along these lines are advanced by the feminist Jean Hampton, the black liberationist Bernard Boxill, and Martha Nussbaum on behalf of homosexuals. Nussbaum, for example, wants to use the law to break down the "atmosphere of taboo and disgust that fosters discrimination and violence against gays and lesbians".

In resisting such claims classical liberals have a hard task. Anthony Flew and Michael Levin reply that the social outcomes disliked by the liberationists ("gendered roles" for women, inferior jobs for blacks) are not, in fact, the result of patriarchy or racism but of free choice by women (Anthony Flew) or the "phenotypical characteristics" of blacks (Michael Levin). Neither view is wholly plausible. Sexism and racism do exist, and are "socially structured".

Flew and Levin might have done better to emphasise the costs to freedom of any serious legislative attempt to overturn the inherited attitudes of society, rather than argue that these attitudes are wholly rational. Yet liberals find it hard to defend institutions and practices which are not grounded in reason.

Conservatives do not suffer from this disability, and Roger Scruton effectively deploys the conservative case against Martha Nussbaum in the best exchange in the book. Nussbaum argues a right to same-sex marriages. It is hard for a liberal to resist: it is universal, it enlarges the liberty of some while imposing no restrictions on the liberty of others. Scruton puts a number of functional arguments for legal protection of the traditional family, which extend to keeping gay men out of the armed forces.

The traditional family unit, he says, is an irreplaceable form of social capital, embodying the "spirit of sacrifice" to future generations; teaching traditional morality is a necessary investment in good habits. Functional arguments are all that are left to conservatives when traditional authority is gone. But I doubt whether they are sufficient to withstand the pressure of the rights activists, even less to direct behaviour in particular cases, once their "sacred" supports have been overwhelmed by profane reasonings.

Like conservatism, "liberation theology", developed in Latin America, is not centrally concerned with rights but with duties. According to Cohn-Sherbok, the Old Testament demand for justice imposes an imperative duty on Jews and Christians to fight for the liberation of the poor from poverty. Central to this view is that the Kingdom of God is built through earthly activity, which culminates with the coming of the Messiah.

John Wilson has little difficulty in demolishing these propositions. If there are good reasons for liberating the poor from injustice, then they will apply to anyone and not just to Jews and Christians. So scriptural authority cannot be a rational ground for being a liberationist. Moreover, the Bible does not tell us anything about the best methods for achieving liberationist aims, which is the province of the specialised sciences.

The mixture of religious eschatology and messianic socialism, of which "liberation theology" is but the latest incarnation, has been an incredibly powerful motive force in history. Rather than dismiss it as an intellectual mistake, Wilson would have done better to point out its murderous consequences, for victims and prophets alike.

Liberals have an easier time in countering the argument for children's and animal rights, put forward by John Harris and Andrew Linzey respectively. An effective response here is to say that animals and children are not entitled to equal rights because they are not equal to adults or humans in the relevant respects. Michael Leashy, for example, has little difficulty in showing that animals are not "persons".

With these populations, the case for special protection can be made without contradiction. The "liberation debate" shows how powerful the claim to victimhood still is, how inventive the language used to promote it, how rusty the intellectual weapons available to resist it. The one topic missing from this book is cost. Liberation does not come cheap. So far a general disinclination to pay the costs — in money or duties — as well as some lingering taboos (against homosexual behaviour) have frustrated the liberationists. But those who worry about threats to liberty and privacy should sharpen up their weapons. They may need them.

Lord Skidelsky is Professor of Political Economy at Warwick University.



Animal rights protests, March 1995

THE LIBERATION DEBATE  
Rights At Issue  
Edited by Michael Leashy and Dan Cohn-Sherbok  
Routledge, £40

# Love behind the palace walls

HULTON DEUTSCH



The Princess's love for her husband enabled her to bear the isolation of her life: their arrival in London for the Queen's Coronation in 1953

## Joanna Pitman on a revealing glimpse behind an imperial mask

This is a remarkable and intriguing memoir, beautifully translated. The only autobiography ever published by a member of Japan's imperial family, *The Silver Drum* is a surprisingly frank personal account by Princess Chichibu of her life, after she was plucked unexpectedly from the ranks of Japan's ordinary pigtailed schoolgirls and chosen to become the wife of Prince Chichibu, younger brother of Emperor Hirohito and therefore next in line to the Chrysanthemum throne.

She was just 18 at the time, the natural and unrestrained daughter of Japan's ambassador to America, looking forward to a continued exuberant life revolving around her family, friends, sports, travel — and her liberty.

Bursting in on her dreams in 1927 came an envoy dispatched to Washington by the Empress Dowager — widow of the late Emperor Taisho — with instructions to obtain marriage consent from parents and from daughter, who had been spotted some years earlier by the Empress Dowager on one of her bi-annual visits to Tokyo's Futaba School to look for future brides for her four sons.

The poor girl could not for the life of her understand why she had to be sacrificed to the unknown "other world" of the Imperial Family, to be married to a man she had barely met once or twice in passing. She recalls the fear, panic and

discipline of a young and lonely woman, bounding about in the unexplained rigours of imperial etiquette and suffering a painful initiation into the rigid formalities of court life.

Correct posture, dress and decorum was all. She was told not to let her feet show when walking, she was scolded for putting her shoes away and the mere touching of an ornamental bird in the garden brought cries of "Oh no Madam, let me do that".

Her collection of jazz records was judged unsuitable and removed on moving into the palace and she was warned not to write casual letters. When she met her mother again months after her marriage, she was barely able to say a thing, so constrained was she by her new circumstances.

But running through her story, glinting like a gold thread, was the one saving grace of her life — her immediate fondness and later deep love for her husband, who comes across as an enlightened man, with an eagerness, rare for his time, to know and understand the Japanese people. Historians will learn much of his sympathetic and

THE SILVER DRUM  
By Princess Chichibu  
Global Books, £14.95

inventive nature but little of his role in the war.

But much else of the imperial institution is revealed. Given that the imperial household is still so shrouded in secrecy and mystery, this volume offers a rare, valuable and to all appearances truthful insight, and its sanction from on high indicates an interesting change of tack for an institution hitherto terrified of the decaying breath of publicity.

The translation by Dorothy Britton is a tour de force. Done with sympathy and grace, this was an exacting task given the formality of imperial Japanese language. Britton gives us many of the sublayers, the hints and allusions which are the very nature of the language, but which remain so elusive to most translators.

As I read the memoirs, I could not help thinking of Crown Princess Masako, a cosmopolitan young woman with a happy future of family, career and friends to look forward to, who more recently was chosen and similarly attempted to refuse (three times over a period of some years in her case) marriage to the heir to the throne.

She too bowed to duty in the end and married in 1993, giving up her career as a diplomat and disappearing behind the walls of the imperial palace in Tokyo. Little has been seen of her since, but one can only hope that she too has found happiness and support in her husband.

## Hearing spirit voices

THE OLD world of County Cork, the new world of Charles Town, Georgia and the lost Paradise of the West Indies in the early 18th century provide three backdrops for Alison MacLeod's dramatic first novel. A cast of farmers and aristocrats, pirates, sailors and slaves gives it all the vigour of an adventure story. But by positioning a cross-dressing, bi-sexual young woman centre stage, she poses some modern questions about the perception of women in a male world.

This author has already written for the theatre, and her first act here, with the birth and childhood of the changing and future pirate, Anne Bonny, is resonant with signs of the drama to come. A harsh landscape looks more like MacLeod's native Canada than the southwest coast of Ireland, and the keening voice of Anne, the peasant who raises the child, sound unlikely. But when Anne's father decides to raise his illegitimate child as a boy and claim an

Aisling Foster

THE CHANGELING  
By Alison MacLeod  
Macmillan, £15.99

## Honour to a great poet

THE numerous recent English-language attempts on Dante's *Inferno* (including Peter Greenaway palimpsest-montage telefilm) speak of a discontent with the existing versions but also of an increasing sense that this poem, of all the classics, most directly addresses and challenges our own time.

Within hell's vast but narrowing circles, Dante is forced to confront images of catastrophic human failure and suffering. His response may vary from spite to pity but he is never so in tune with the omnipotent architect and jailer as utterly to repress his sorrow at the debasement of the human form.

When he sees, for example, the necrologues, their heads on back-to-front, he asks: "How could I have kept Tears of my own from falling for the sake of our human image so grotesquely reshaped? Confronted so the eyes' tears fell to wet the buttocks at the cleft." Despite the rebuke this earns from his guide Virgil, if Dante had been incapable of this response we would dismiss him as a torturer's henchman.

Though his former teacher Brunetto Latini is condemned to run forever on the burning marl among the sodomites, Dante treats him as a father figure, and as an intellectual victor *ludorum*. Dante himself is implicated in the sins published — though in some more than others, as we see in the delectation with which he prompts Francesca's flawed but beautiful account of her adultery with Paolo.



Michael Mazur's monotypes offer a new vision of Dante

Jamie McKendrick  
THE INFERNO OF DANTE  
A New Verse Translation  
By Robert Pinsky  
J. M. Dent, £20

John Freccero, the eminent Dante scholar who introduces this new translation, would frown on this reading for its failure to separate Dante the pilgrim from the poet Dante, who identifies himself with the "potenza di Dio", and yet it is the unreconciled tension between these two perspectives which holds our imagination.

Dante does not merely create the crowded horror-chambers of so many medieval pictures but brings back from there the individual stories in the distinctive cadences of the

damned. We distinguish them by their voices as well as their postures: the haughty Tuscan of Farinata sitting bolt-upright in his tomb; the thin courtly immobilised subjunctives of Pier de la Vigna whistled through the broken branch that serves him for a larynx in the Suicide's Wood. The many languages of hell, from Nimrod's bestial gobbledygook to Ulysses's humanist gushing tones give this inverted Babel its global range.

Although the damned can see the future, unlike the souls of the other two books they can never inhabit it, which makes their memories of earth their only tormenting possession: whilst Dante's own homesickness as a Florentine exile makes him perceive these eternal abodes through a political and geological map of Italy.

Mandelstam compared the *Commedia* to a single crystal of "13,000 facets", each line

reflecting the whole structure. It would be folly to expect the poem to recast itself into another language when the rhetorical resources of even a single canto have exhausted many of the finest later poets, but Robert Pinsky's translation is really to be welcomed. He offers a half-rhyme *terza rima*, where Dorothy Sayers fully rhymes, but his phrasing is far better as is his rhythmic sense.

There are, however, two prosodic weaknesses. The first is a varying line length which lacks the definition of Dante's hendecasyllables — where he settles for the pentameter the effect is instantly more electric. The other problem is a tendency to brusquely enjambed lines so that he makes the straight crooked and the resonant off-key. These annoyances don't prevent Pinsky's from being the best and the most readable contemporary English-language version of the *Inferno*.

After Doré's lugubrious engravings which have clung to the poem's hem for so long, Michael Mazur's monotypes are a relief. With their corroded viscous darks, they make the visible a little hard to see. Two are especially haunting: a crow's eye view of the hoarders and spenders at the moment of impact, an authentic *contrappasso* and the towers of Dis like signalling Norman watchtowers.

Jamie McKendrick's *The Kingdom on the Brink* is published by OUP

IT IS not surprising that Georges Perec compiled crosswords for a living. For the effect of reading anything of his is to be driven temporarily mad by one's readerly inadequacies. To read the recent translation of *La Disparition*, a lipogrammatic novel eschewing the letter "e", was to emerge from it cursing the appearance of that letter in any other medium — newspapers, magazines, medical prescriptions — and assume its user to be illiterate and clumsy.

In this triptych, translated by Ian Monk, there is a story which uses up all the "e"s Perec had left over from *La Disparition*, and ignores the other four vowels. Just as you leave a crossword thinking everything you hear is a clue, or leave a wordsearch puzzle looking for mythical birds' names encrypted diagonally in whichever block of prose you encounter immediately afterwards, so you leave *The Exeter Text: Jewels, Secrets, Sex* temporarily unable to think straight.

But Perec was permanently unable to think straight, and could not compose unless he set himself inhumanly difficult limitations. That is why he was a member of OULIPO, a group of barny writers in the 1960s who believed that literature emerged most felicitously from the imposition of quasi-mathematical constraints. They were wrong, of course, but it was the Sixties.

The e-ful story tells the tale of a jewel thief, and an orgy in the grounds of a cathedral, but while the narrative elements could probably be enjoyed with a little work, it is as an onslaught on orthographic correctness that it manages to entertain. For Perec does not

## Sorted for Es

Giles Coren

THREE  
By Georges Perec  
Harvill, £7.99 pb original



Perec literary rebellion

merely avoid words which contain other vowels, he spells them according to his strictures: "Next, wheyele the Emeenece's freyl feelers kerressed seven deevyne bedes, he sed the vespers."

If nothing else, this terrifying and dislocating experience makes you pant with relief to arrive on the relatively solid ground of the other two tales.

Which Moped With Chrome-Plated Handlebars At The Back Of The Yard? does not get any less cumbersome once you are through the title, but it is at least spelt traditionally, and the story — in which a group of friends plot to save

a young man from conscription in the Algerian war by breaking his leg — is full of the dark humour of the Left Bank in the years leading up to "Les Evénements".

The exercise, in this case, is to break as many stylistic conventions as possible, and to parody a succession of rhetorical ornaments. This having been written before his enrollment with OULIPO, Perec is human enough to provide at least half an index to these at the end of his text. Oh, and the hero of the piece is never referred to twice by the same name — a spot of fun that is manageable in a 40 page novella, but would have wreaked havoc if Tolstoy had tried it in *War and Peace*.

A Gallery Portrait is technically the easiest to cope with. An art collector commissions a portrait of himself in a room with his collection. On the wall, in the portrait, is a portrait of the art collector in a room with his collection. On the wall, in the portrait in the portrait...

The piece is a collage of extracts from imaginary art history books, biographies, and exhibition notes, and Perec displays the huge descriptive skills that lurk behind his posturing, as each little piece becomes genuinely gripping before disappearing into something new.

As a picture of an artist consumed by the fever of method it is, of course, a self portrait, and a tragic one at that. But it is all in the name of fun, and while realism has now firmly reestablished its grip on the literary status quo, this is a fascinating glimpse of a revolutionary age struggling to find expression.

No one, however, will be getting rich on the film rights.



Peter Ackroyd on the enigma of England's Lord Protector: a Puritan who was enthroned in ermine

## Light that shone on a heart of darkness

To John Milton he was "our Chief of Men" but to others he was the Anti-Christ, the beast of the Reformation eventually come to light: he was the "Matchless Prince", or "Devil of later times". He has become, then, a creature of legend whose fame rests upon the fact that, as Mr Gaunt says in this excellent brief study, he is England's only "non-royal head of state".

Yet, as far as Cromwell was concerned, he was simply tossed into the air by God the gambler. He was selected by Providence and, as he once observed, "no one rises so high as he who knows not whether he is going". Fostering hardly knows where he came from, either, since the evidence of his early life is scattered and inconclusive. He spent his first 40 years as an unknown farmer and gentleman in East Anglia: his seems to be a familiar story of a "great figure" emerging from a family "in decline", as Mr Gaunt tells us, and therefore of "ambiguous" social rank.

There are more suggestive notes, however: he was brought up in a household of seven sisters, and was prone to deep melancholy, no doubt exacerbated by the contamination of the East Anglian fens. He displayed no interest in politics at all, but at some point he showed distinct evidence of a religious conversion. "Blessed be His name," he wrote at the age of 39, "for shining upon so dark a heart as mine!" He may not have been separate, or even precise, but he was certainly moving to the "elect" end of the religious fold.

It was in his role as one of the godly that he eventually and belated-

ly came to prominence. The story of his opposition to Charles I in the Long Parliament, and his post as a captain of a cavalry in the Parliamentary Army, is well enough known not to need a further rehearsal here. Yet it is apposite to note that Cromwell discovered his true genius as an army commander: his decisiveness and power of organisation were never to be so well exercised in the political sphere, and it might be said that as Lord Protector he was always a general *manqué*. As far as he was concerned, however, he was always in the hands of God. His letters are filled with enough vows and imprecations to do justice to a sermon by Savonarola.

Of course there has been more violence and cruelty done in the name of God than in that of any earthly ruler, and we might be inclined to look upon Cromwell's piety with certain misgivings. He preferred to quote from the Old Testament rather than the New, which is generally the sign of an unquiet conscience, and his blood lust during the Irish campaign is as monstrous as anything in English history. When the Puritan settlers of New England exterminated the Indians with the name of Christ upon their lips, they were merely rehears-

ing Cromwell's belief that his massacre of the Roman Catholic Irish, or "wild Irish", was evidence of God's "righteous justice".

The same kind of religious sensibility is at work in both instances, at once paranoid and vindictive, exclusive and minority. Cromwell often talked of blood being spilled, or harvested; he dismissed the Rump

OLIVER CROMWELL

By Peter Gaunt

Blackwell, £18.99

Parliament in part because its members had "never bled" for their nation, and so we are presented with the idea of national life as a continual sacrifice in the tradition of Moloch or Magog.

More particular forces were also at work in this strange polity. Cromwell had a hatred of Roman Catholics, and it is well known that there was a large band of "Levelers" in his army. During the time of the Civil Wars and of his Protectorate, therefore, there is a more general cultural and social struggle in evidence. It was a Puritan who tried effectively to renounce the ancient

customs of his country, and a hundred years after the Reformation Oliver Cromwell might be seen as finishing the work of Thomas Cromwell. As Mr Gaunt notes, he became "a party to violent, unconstitutional action and the destruction of the existing political and governmental system". This is what happens when you espouse a religion based upon faith and grace rather than tradition and authority.

Yet it must also be said that he was less rigid and less discriminatory than many of his colleagues, and he generally deemed it safer to take a middle course through the waves of political faction. As a result he was accused then, and now, of mendacity allied with overwhelming ambition. His constant invocations of "the Lord" in the middle of various conspiratorial manoeuvres certainly lay him open to the charge of mischievous hypocrisy. There is a very interesting description from a contemporary pamphlet: "You shall scarce speak to Cromwell about anything, but he will lay his hand on his breast, elevate his eyes, and call God to record; he will weep, howl, and repent, even while he doth smite you under the first rib". Certainly his violent dismissal of Parliament, and his acceptance of monarchical pow-

ers, do not suggest the behaviour of one altogether humble in the service of the Lord. As Protector, he lived in the palaces of Whitehall and Hampton Court: his head, enwreathed in laurel, appeared on coins and medals. On his first enthronement he wore a plain black suit, and yet for his second he wore ermine. He was addressed as "Your Highness", and effectively turned himself into "King Oliver".

This is a carefully written and well argued account; since its author is also chairman of the Cromwell Association, it is also extraordinarily impartial. Yet Cromwell himself does not emerge in any vivid or particular light. He was prone to sudden euphoria and depression "always making haste", as he said of himself — but there are very few other clues about what was, even to his contemporaries, a most puzzling character.

An interesting thesis on the subject of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* suggests that the novel is in fact a fantastic reworking of the events of the mid-17th century, with the characters of Oliver Twist and Monks — half-brothers in rivalry over an inheritance — somehow echoing the historical roles of Oliver Cromwell and General Monk. It is a possibility, of course, but in fact Cromwell would be much better placed in the pages of *Martin Chuzzlewit*. He is part Pecksniff and part Tom Finch, hypocritical and pious at the same time. Was he a great leader, or was he a great charlatan? Could the truth be that he was, perhaps, both?

## A N A C T FOR THE ATTAINDER OF THE REBELS IN IRELAND

At the Parliament begun at Westminster  
the 17<sup>th</sup> day of September, An. Dom. 1656.



London Printed by Henry Hills and John Field, Printers to  
His Highness the Lord Protector. 1657.

The Cromwell Act of 1657 confiscated the estates of Irish rebels and banished "those of Popish religion"

## Pass the Alka-Seltzer

Adopting the Proustian method of allowing sensual experience to dictate narrative shape and suddenly re-experiencing tastes to evoke long-forgotten childhood memories, John Lanchester's novel idles along on a sentimental and gastronomic journey through France, mixing story-telling, recipes, reminiscence and hints of mysterious crimes to tickle the reader's palate and nudge even the most unwilling audience into admiration of its cleverness.

Irony, so beloved of a certain sort of English writer, is apparently all: style, content, plot. The novel opens as the memoir, joined as he goes, of Tarquin Winot, gourmet, word-splurper and snob. At first there's no obvious reason why Winot (Why-not?) should write as he does, piling Baroque clause upon wordy met-

Michèle Roberts

THE DEBT TO  
PLEASURE  
By John Lanchester  
Picador, £15.99

aphor upon over-lengthy parenthesis to produce lopping Eiffel Towers of prose. This parody of Brillat-Savarin, seasoned with a dash of Henry James and peppered, as noted above, with *homage* to Proust, seems mere self-indulgent pastiche, the borrowing of others' language as costumes substituting for the proper development of character.

Soon, we come to realise that Winot, like a 19th-century maid turned out of the house for immorality, cannot be given a character. He is what he seems: a Russian farm boy. In disguise. The plot of the novel turns out to be indeed a *plot*, with murder and lust at its heart. The novel transforms itself in a novel way, much as a bowl of eggy cream turns into a soufflé when you're not looking. The picaresque cookbook becomes a thriller, and like the dinner guests, applauding a perfect soufflé's lightness we have to admit that Lanchester has had us delightfully fooled.

The novel, following Winot's leisurely progress south, permits itself many diversions, through the seasons, and through the regions of France, in order to throw dust in the reader's eyes about the purpose of the trip while simulta-



neously allowing delicious anecdotes of gourmandise to be recounted. Arrival by boat in St Malo, for example, provokes Winot to remember the sort of winter menus cooked by his Irish nanny Mary-Teresa. We're given not only her classic version of Irish stew but also the story of her dismissal from the narrator's Paris home for theft. This episode is charmingly told. Winot's personality slips; he and his style become simpler and more *sympathique*.

He recovers himself. His sentences are once more bect-

cally garnished to the point of hysteria, and he goes back to being unpleasant: half a bottle of wine is "spinsterish", civilisation depends upon ignoring the starving, and so on. The clue to his emotional state is always to be found in his language. Giving himself away is always followed by even more extravagant dandyish posing.

He has a poet's ear for naming and for lists. He is capable of appreciating the elaborate display of a *charcuterie*: "jambon fumé, jambon de Bayonne, prosciutto

to crudo di Parma, jambon d'Ardennes..." — and so on. In between these disquisitions, the plot thickens much like Irish stew, imperceptibly and gradually. Winot reveals, or pretends to, the tale of his famous artist brother, their sibling rivalry, his own long-held grudges. Tracking an apparently innocent honeymoon couple, he ensures and manipulates them so that they become actors in his design for villainy. The chit-chat is amusingly done: "you may find this fig confiture especially apt with that brioche... Italian

friends do say that figs are the ideal accompaniment to Parma ham. These, of course, are from one's own tree. Laura, spot more correct *Domage*." It's possible to find the old codger, the young faggy clichés, wearisome. Winot does go on a great deal. Even the most delicious French lunch can have its *longueurs*. Sometimes I wanted a literary equivalent of the *trou normand*, a little snifter to aid digestion. Just a *soupeon* less self-congratulation on the author's part would also have been welcome.

PAUL JOHNSON plays a number of roles in our literary life, all with distinction. The most significant is that of a historian of religion and ideas: his *Modern Times* has made him a cult figure in Eastern Europe and the United States. He is also a fearless polemical journalist who takes on his adversaries in trenchant prose.

Now he embarks on a "personal pilgrimage", *The Quest for God*. This is perhaps the most audacious of his endeavours: faith is a personal matter that not only makes one vulnerable to ridicule, but also reveals the difficulty of putting one's own most profound emotions into words. Nor is faith static, as Johnson realises: "I have begun this book to resolve many doubts in my own mind, to clarify my thoughts and to try and define what God means to me and my life."

The resolving of doubts is probably the least successful of these three objectives because there is little evidence that he has had any. Coming from a pious Roman Catholic family, and educated by the Jesuits, he never seems to have had misgivings about the essential tenets of the Catholic faith. Being in the same position myself, I do not subscribe to the notion that one must doubt before one can believe; but I had hoped to learn more about his convictions in his

## Faith in Saint Jane

Piers Paul Read

THE QUEST FOR  
GOD  
A Personal Pilgrimage  
By Paul Johnson  
Weidenfeld and Nicolson,  
£14.99

socialist days, and the links between his religious and political beliefs.

His "quest" is in reality a literary convention: what Johnson has written is an excellent résumé of a traditional Catholic's faith. Prayers of his own composition given in an appendix use traditional phraseology, a welcome contrast to the banality of most modern incantations.

Among Johnson's talents is that of a teacher, and here he is clearly happier to teach than to inquire. The book benefits enormously from his erudition: it contains fascinating nuggets of information about the history of religion; but the more historical, the less personal the quest. He makes

personal references from time to time to his wife Marigold, his invariably elevated companions Jean Sibelius, A.J. Ayer, Margaret Thatcher, a duke, a Scottish laird, a "beautiful and fashionable lady", and he describes his own habits of prayer: he goes to church every morning and kisses "Our Lord's poor feet, nailed to the cross and bleeding, before I begin my work each day". However, none of this makes *The Quest for God* a confessional work like St Augustine's *Confessions*. It is rather a work of personalised apologetics in the tradition of G.K. Chesterton, Karl Adam or F.J. Sheed.

Johnson is not without views that might raise the odd eyebrow in Rome. He prays to Jane Austen to help him to perfect his prose, and believes that women should be able to be priests, bishops and even Pope. One wonders how he has reacted to the present Pope's ruling to the contrary, pronounced infallibly by Cardinal Ratzinger.

*The Quest for God* is a competent, learned and written in a fine prose style. My only disappointment was the feeling that while this is undoubtedly the truth it is not the whole truth. If not doubts, has there been no suffering? No dark nights of the soul? Johnson has given us an excellent Profession of Faith: his *De Profundis* has yet to come.

## Charming the elements

Tibor Fischer

PARTICLE THEORY  
By Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy  
Hutchinson, £14.99

London to devote himself to searching for Elfrida, his beloved Latvian nanny, and to filling the large house he lives in with his various collections.

Ivan's life, on the other hand, is far more dramatic and globe-trotting. He, like Michael, is an orphan, but as physically rugged as Michael is weedy. He volunteers for the Red Army, but then deserts and escapes from the Soviet Union. He, like Michael, goes to Cambridge, but it is only at the end of the book, in present-day Israel, that they are fated to meet with memorable impact: Ivan has years of travelling to do before that rendezvous.

Gathorne-Hardy writes with great simplicity, and with much wit and colour: "there are French letters all along the shore like the ghosts of cocks".

The drawback to writing this way is that pedestrian passages stick out. One or two of the middle sections, such as Ivan's arm-wrestling exploits in Africa, or Michael's gradual repletion of his house, while entertaining in themselves, almost seem to be there only to delay the catastrophe.

Nevertheless *Particle Theory* is a work that will keep its readers on their toes as Gathorne-Hardy switches style from run-of-the-mill realism, to comedy, to a mutant expressionism and back again. Ivan comes up through the floorboards of a beautiful girl's bedroom in a provincial town called Rubinsk and announces to her: "I found I had this power. I could create people... I could make all sorts of things happen — cows go mad, the rivers flood. And one day I created Rubinsk."

"But that's nonsense," said Sofka. "Rubinsk's been here for centuries."

It takes you a while to decide who's right. *Particle Theory* is funny, sometimes extremely moving and clever; you'll probably have to read it twice.

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SCEPTRE







# Disney to launch its own cruise liners

By DAVID CHURCHILL

DISNEY yesterday unveiled plans to launch the two largest purpose-built cruise ships in the world. It also revealed it had bought a Bahamian island to be a Disney-themed port of call for cruise passengers.

Disney plans to have its first ship, the 85,000-ton *Disney Magic* liner, in service by the beginning of 1998 and a second vessel, *Disney Wonder*, launched later that year. Both will be built in Trieste, Italy.

The decision to build its own

cruise ships comes amid reports that Disney is interested in buying the *Queen Elizabeth II* from the troubled Cunard Line. Disney sources now say such a move is unlikely. Disney used to own the *Queen Mary* liner, which was moored at Long Beach, California, and operated as a themed hotel. The company sold the ship in the early 1990s.

The Disney cruise ships will have 880 rooms and a capacity of 2,400 passengers. Most of the crew will be American, but officers and catering staff will include a large proportion

of Europeans. The vessels will be fitted out in Disney style, with a three-storey atrium lobby featuring a sweeping staircase in the grand manner of the great transatlantic ocean liners of the past. There will be a 1,040-seat theatre with Broadway-quality entertainment, plus a cinema and a 5,500 sq ft shopping mall. Three themed restaurants will cater for families, and a dinner restaurant will serve adults only.

Disney plans to sell four-day cruises around the Caribbean, including a stopover at its 1,000-acre

island. The ships will be based at Port Canaveral, Florida, about an hour and a half's drive from Walt Disney World in Orlando. The cruise packages will probably include a three or four-night stay at Disney World.

This is part of Disney's new strategy of extending its grip on holidaymakers by offering them vacations other than visits to its theme park resorts. It has recently opened two resort hotels, at Vero Beach in Florida and at Hilton Head island in South Carolina.

Disney has yet to set the prices for its cruise ships, but it is believed to be aiming at the middle to upper price range rather than the budget sector, where the Caribbean cruise market is already showing excess capacity.

A Disney spokesman said: "We aim to offer the Disney quality and experience rather than just be another cruise operator."

The first cruise brochure will be published in July this year. Bookings for the initial cruises in 1998 will be taken from August.

## Ferries suffer as Britons stay at home

By STEVE KEENAN

THE number of day-trip shoppers taking the ferry to France has plunged by up to 30 per cent this winter.

P&O European Ferries and Stena Line have been hit by a double blow: a stormy winter and fierce competition from Eurotunnel.

The losses are a big blow for the ferries, which rely on duty-free and on-board sales for at least a quarter of their revenue, and which face increased competition this summer.

In 1995, one million travel-

lers took day-trips in the first three months of the year, the ferry operators filling other-wise empty ships by offering day-trips for as little as £1. But this year the figure has fallen by more than 250,000, say the ferries, with the miserable weather in January and February partly to blame for keeping people at home.

The scrapping of temporary passports, the strength of the franc and the supermarket price-war in the UK are other factors for the slump.

"The market is depressed, the British visitors passport has disappeared, and people haven't got the money," said a spokesman for P&O.

P&O is the UK's biggest duty-free ferry operator, which accounts for 30 per cent of the company's £600 million annual revenue. Customers spend an average of £20 on board and more in Calais supermarkets.

"Last year, the market was hot with cheap fares, which coincided with a nice spell of weather in January and February," said Martin Brown, owner of the Grape Shops in Boulogne and Calais. "This year, there are still cheap fares but we have had a run of bad weather through January. It has been fairly quiet in Calais."

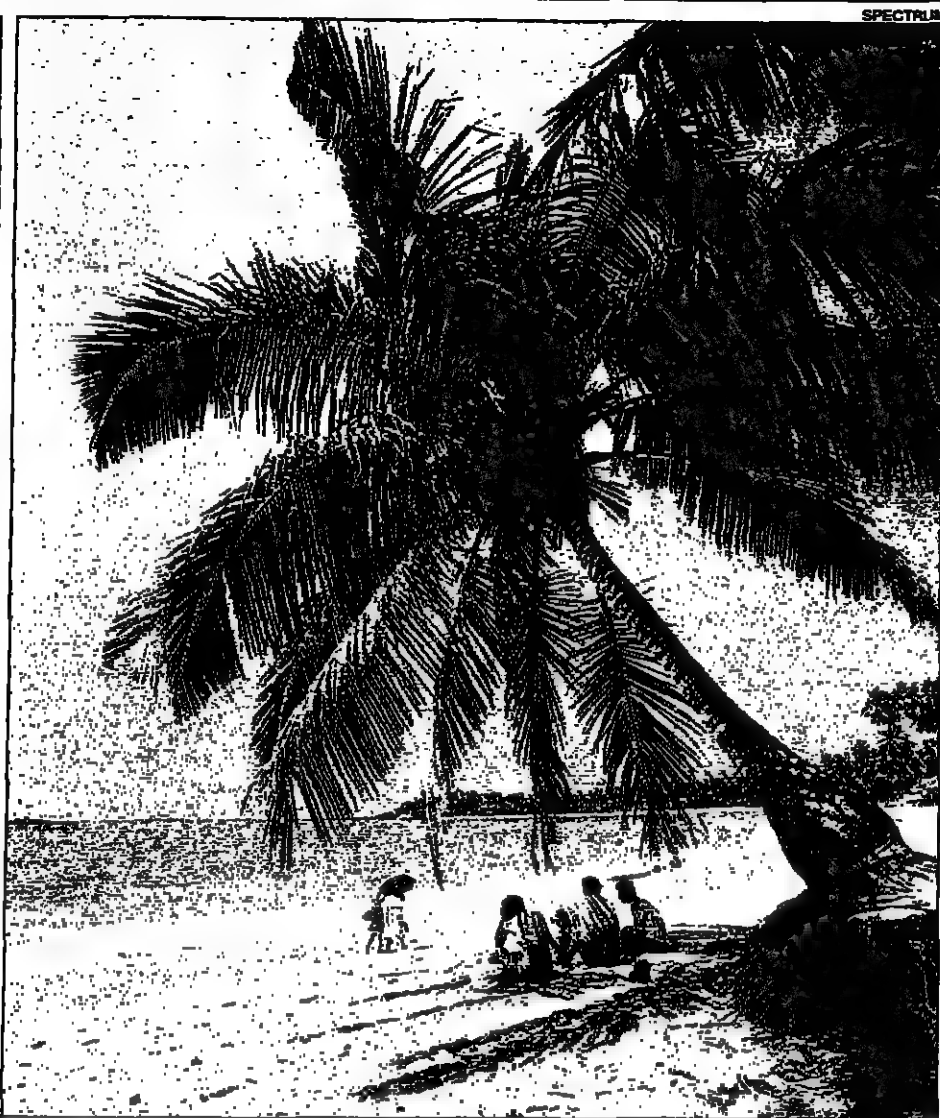
One company doing better than 1995 is the car-carrying Le Shuttle service through the Channel Tunnel. Le Shuttle is offering 66 per cent off high-street prices, reducing, for example, a bottle of Gubey's gin to £4.65.

The company is again extending its sales area at the Folkestone terminal in time for Easter, which will triple its original duty-free space. "We think the 66 per cent offer has attracted 15 per cent additional traffic this winter," said a spokesman.

In February, more than 117,000 cars were carried on Le Shuttle, double the figure in February last year. Nearly 3,000 coaches also travelled last month.

Cross-Channel travellers can buy duty-free goods on the outbound and return journeys, and also spend a day in French supermarkets buying cheap duty-paid goods.

Losses to Customs & Excise were last year estimated at £110 million, with 3 per cent of all beer drunk in Britain imported.



Sri Lanka's cricket World Cup win has put its attractive resorts back on the tourist map

## Sri Lanka bounces back

By TONY DAWE

THE JOY in the streets of Colombo this week as crowds celebrated Sri Lanka's cricket World Cup win has been shared by British airlines and tour operators.

They had identified the country as a booming travel destination. The operators increased the number of flights and holidays, but suffered a drop in tourism after the bomb that killed 80 people in Colombo in January. Now, with wider public awareness of Sri Lanka, they forecast a rise in visitors.

John Sim, of Kuoni, said: "The happy news will do an awful lot to restore holiday-makers' confidence in Sri Lanka. The war with the Tamil Tigers did not affect bookings adversely until the Colombo bomb. The decision of the Aus-

tralian and West Indies cricket teams to forfeit their matches in Sri Lanka also influenced tourists and numbers fell."

Kuoni's Sri Lanka bookings rose by 44 per cent last year. Most holidaymakers combining time in a beach hotel with an island tour to see ancient cities, waterfalls and wildlife. Tourists have, however, been reorganised to send visitors to beach and airport hotels.

The increased tourist appeal is being especially welcomed by Thomson, which has planned a big increase in the number of Sri Lankan holidays it offers. It hopes to take between 6,000 and 8,000 tourists on its winter and forthcoming summer programmes,

compared with 1,000 in the previous year.

British Airways will also be cheered because it restarted regular services to Colombo only four months ago. And Britannia and Monarch Airlines operate regular charter flights.

Vimal Wickremaratne, of the Sri Lanka tourist office in London, said: "Winning the World Cup has given Sri Lanka a great boost, especially in the UK market, because of British interest in cricket. Visitors from the UK increased by a third to 63,000 last year, but the bomb led to cancellations and a drop in inquiries."

The Foreign Office advises tourists to avoid the north and east of the island, but says the main tourist resorts and "cultural triangle" are unaffected.

## French Eurostar plans faster routes

By RACHAEL JOLLEY

FRENCH Railways is planning to win more British customers from the airlines when it launches a new range of Eurostar services in the summer. The company is to offer quicker connections to the south of France and Brittany which avoid Paris.

New connections linking with Eurostar via Lille will include TGVs to Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Poitiers, Rennes and Nantes. Journey times will be cut by up to an hour and a half when the new services begin in June.

Jean Michel Diner, managing director of French Railways UK, said the new routes would compete with airlines for pricing and travelling time. He said: "We will be as imaginative as the airlines."

Eurostar claims to have won 50 per cent of the traffic from London to Paris away from the airlines since its launch and M Diner is convinced it would gain even more customers.

Connection times at Lille between Eurostar and exist-

ing French Railways services would be improved so customers did not have to wait so long, he said.

A Eurostar/TGV service to the Alps, run for skiers for the first time this winter, will be available for a longer period of time next year. And direct Eurostar services to the south of France are planned for the future.

Consortium London and Continental is to take over the running of European Passenger Services, the UK Eurostar operator. In the summer, it is already planning a price war with the airlines. M Diner said he expected to see a wider range of fares with specialised tickets, such as Apex and Super Apex, similar to those offered by airlines.

Mike Gates, a director at Hogg Robinson, said there was no doubt the new connections would make train travel more attractive. "It certainly will have an impact. It becomes quite a reasonable option for those on business," he said.

## Bumper boost for Irish tourist trade

By TONY DAWE AND HARVEY ELLIOTT

THE boom in tourism to Ireland has been given extra impetus by travellers from the other side of the world, according to the latest figures from both the Irish and Northern Ireland tourist boards.

Holidaymakers from Australia, New Zealand and Japan are among the groups visiting the two countries in vastly increased numbers, with little sign of the setback in the peace process deterring them.

Visitors from the Australian continent to the Republic rose last year to 90,000 while 20,000 went to the North, compared with 68,000 and 9,000 in 1994. The number of visitors from Britain also rose markedly.

Tourism in the Republic has been given a further boost by the inclusion for the first time of eight Irish country house hotels in the

Elegant Resorts' luxury hotels in Europe brochure. They include the Kildare Hotel and Country Club, created by Michael Smurfit, the Irish entrepreneur, the Mount Juliet Estate in Co Kilkenny, Ashford Castle, Co Mayo and Dromoland Castle, Co Clare.

"The quality of hotels in Ireland is superb and that combined with the peace process and requests by our clients has encouraged us to expand into the country," said Geoffrey Moss, Elegant Resorts' managing director.

But the "really good news" about the large increase in visitors to Northern Ireland, comes from Baroness Denton, Ulster's economy minister. "More than 460,000 people came to Northern Ireland for a holiday and nine out of ten said they wanted to come back," she said.

## Battle over city breaks

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

THE travel giant Thomson is setting up a separate unit to sell city breaks in an attempt to regain its share of the rapidly expanding market.

The company is offering independent breaks in 14 of the most popular cities around the world at prices ranging from £129 for a night in Paris

to seven nights in New York at the Waldorf Astoria for £999.

Steve Allen, Thomson commercial director says: "Five years ago Thomson was market leader but during the recession we went back to our core business and allowed small specialist companies to move into city breaks. As a



New York: Thomson's Waldorf Astoria package costs £999

result we took our eye off the ball and our share of the market has slumped to only about 5 per cent.

"We can be much more flexible than small operators because we can use our size and our experience to obtain the best deals."

But the smaller competitors claim that they are able to provide the better service. Chris Kirker, of Kirker Holidays, who specialises in city breaks and who is also chairman of the Association of Independent Tour Operators, claims Thomson is "becoming desperate".

"They are discovering that the traditional package holiday is virtually dead and they are trying to get a footing in other markets," he says.

"They will find it a very different business. Small companies such as mine can look after our customers on an individual basis and with our lower overheads also keep prices down."

### SATURDAY TRAVEL

Travel the world again in Weekend on Saturday  
Burma — should tourists go?  
Brigid Callaghan in Sardinia  
Robin Neillands in the British Virgin Islands  
Doug Sager on cybernet ski  
plus  
Pakistan and the Seychelles

## Shortfall in holidays forecast

By LINSEY MCNEIL

ONE MILLION people in Britain will be unable to get the package holiday they want this summer because the number on sale has been heavily reduced, according to a leading tour operator.

A 25 per cent drop in bookings at the start of the year led the UK's five largest operators to cut their summer capacity by approximately 11 per cent, but business has since picked up and Paul Brett, chairman and chief executive of Thomson Travel Group, said operators had

fewer holidays left to sell than they had this time last year.

"By mid-April there will be three million people chasing the two million holidays tour operators have left, and inevitably some people will not be able to get the holiday they want," he said.

Mr Brett claimed the capacity reductions by operators also meant there would be fewer last-minute bargains around than there have been in previous summers. "I know the public has heard this all before," he said, "when operators have been trying to persuade people to book ear-

ly, but this year there really will be fewer holidays and fewer bargains because, for the first time, operators have actually reduced capacity."

Market research carried out last month at A.T. Mays, the UK's largest travel agency chain, seems to confirm Thomson's claims.

Mays said its nationwide research revealed 81 per cent of those questioned in the north of England were still waiting to book their summer holiday while 79 per cent of those asked in the South and 75 per cent of those in Scotland had still not booked.

Almost half said they planned to do so between May and October. When asked why they were waiting, 52 per cent said they were hanging on for a better deal.

"This is confirmation that people are still very keen to take an overseas holiday but that they are leaving it later to book," said Roddie MacPhee, A.T. Mays' marketing director.

"Unfortunately that may mean many people will be unable to get a holiday; there are definitely fewer holidays around now than there were at this time last year."

### BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

#### HOLIDAYS

**JERSEY** Travel Service is offering four-day Easter breaks including hotel, car hire and free tickets to the zoo from £199 a person, with flights on April 4 or 5. Details: 0181-891 6020.

**CORSICAN** holidays, with children going free or half-price, are available from Holiday Options. Departing from Gatwick on Easter Sunday, the adult price for a week in an apartment is £299 and for bed and breakfast in a hotel £279. Details: 0171-637 4422.

**VENICE** for two nights for £177, including flights and accommodation, is available from Lupus Travel from April 7. Details: 0171-306 3000.

**SPECIAL** offers to coincide with the Greek Easter festivities in Crete are available from Portland Holidays, with a week's self-

catering holiday costing £204, and half-board in a hotel £278. Departures are from Gatwick on April 11. Details: 0990 002000.

**MICHELIN**-star restaurants are featured in Britanny Ferries' short-break programme for April, with Portsmouth-Caen sailings, dinner, bed and breakfast at Chateau de Sully for £183.50. Details: 0171-771 7010.

**JAZZ** bands will be playing aboard the Monterey on her seven-night Mediterranean cruise on April 15. Prices, from Mediterranean Shipping Cruises, start at £475. Details: 0171-637 2525.

**SPRING** Bank Holiday bargains are now on offer from Lunn Poly, including a week's self-catering in Antigua for £529 departing Gatwick on May 23. Details: 01303 225888.

#### HOTELS

**HUNT** for a solid gold Fabergé Easter egg worth £845 while staying or eating at the Four Seasons hotel in London over Easter. Weekend room rates start at £230 a night. Details: 0171-499 0888.

**A RATE** of £99 a person in a double room for three nights, plus dinner on one night, is available over the Easter weekend at the four-star Petersham hotel at Richmond, Surrey. Details: 0181-940 7471.

**TWO** Easter eggs, along with full breakfast, are on offer at Dukes hotel in St James's, London, over Easter. Double room rates are £160 a night. Details: 0171-491 4840.

**THE** Montcalm Hotel Nikko, central London, is giving champagne and after-

noon tea to guests staying two nights or more between April 1-15. A standard double costs £139.25 a night. Details: 0171-402 4288.

**CHOICE** Hotels is offering free accommodation and meals for children staying with their parents at Quality or Comfort Inn hotels. Half-board £33 a person a night. Details: 0800 444 444.

**VISITORS** to the new Legoland theme park which opens next week can take advantage of a special weekend offer from the nearby Oakley Court hotel. Two nights' half-board accommodation, plus a boat trip on the Thames with admission to Legoland and Windsor Castle costs £208 for adults and £58 for children sharing their parents' room. Details: 01753 609988.

#### FLIGHTS

**AER LINGUS** is undercutting British Airways' New York business-class fare by more than £800. BA's direct-flight price is £2,504, whereas executives prepared to change planes in Dublin pay £1,650 with Aer Lingus. 0181-899 4747.

**EASYJET** is launching Luton-Amsterdam flights on April 24. One-way fares will start at £35. Details: 01582 445566.

**TRAVEL** Warehouse has a £503 seat-sale fare to Kuala Lumpur flying Malaysian Airlines. The agent also has a special fare of £595 to Cairns, Sydney or Brisbane, flying Japan Airlines via Tokyo or Osaka. 0171-414 8808.

**UNITED** Airlines has lowered its first and business-class fares between London and Delhi. First

class now costs £2,325 (£3,323 normally) and business £1,449 (£2,074). The airline provides passengers with free pre-flight hotel accommodation at Heathrow. 0181-990 9000.

**CUT-PRICE** airline AB Shannan is now flying three times a day Gatwick-Shannon with return fares starting at £75. 0345 464748.

**British Airways** has introduced a lower £109 seat-sale fare between Manchester and Amsterdam. (£148 previously). 0345 221111.

**CONTINENTAL** Airlines has introduced a telephone check-in facility at Gatwick and Manchester for business-class passengers flying to the USA. Passengers call 0800 747800 from 06.30 hrs until one hour before departure.



## MADRID

Four nights from just £169 per person  
Departing Wednesday 1st May 1996

Get deep in the heart of Spain, this bustling, cosmopolitan capital offers a blend of history, culture and sophistication. Visit the splendour of the Royal Palace, the treasure of the famous Museo del Prado and the colonnaded Plaza Mayor in the old quarter. Stroll along the Gran Vía with its many elegant shops, or relax in a pavement cafe and enjoy the atmosphere of this vivacious city. For entertainment see a traditional flamenco show, or join the Madrilenos for a delicious meal in one of the traditional tapas bars hidden away in the narrow streets of old Madrid. Optional excursions include a panoramic city sightseeing tour and a full day trip to the imperial Toledo, home of El Greco.

For further information and booking form please call Newmarket Air Holidays on:

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Ask for the Customer Services Department and quote The Times or return the coupon below to:

**The Times Madrid Offer**  
Newmarket Air Holidays Ltd,  
McMillan House  
Worcester Park, Surrey  
KT4 8RH

Also V882 Aml 235

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## Shadow of drugs case about to lift from troubled runner

## Modahl ready to face the world

Andrew Longmore on  
the rehabilitation  
of an athlete with  
Georgia on her mind

Friends ringing the Modahl household over the past ten days have been greeted by an unfamiliar sound. "Hello, this is Diane Modahl," says the voice on the answerphone. They might even have been interrupted by the lady in person.

Talking to a machine might not seem conclusive proof of Modahl's return to society, but enough of the callers have responded with the words: "Hey, Diane, it's good to hear your voice again" to highlight the significance of the deed. When she arrived back from the Commonwealth Games in 1994, not as the 800 metres champion but branded a common drug cheat, Modahl shut herself away from family and friends. She did not answer the phone for 18 months.

Now, Modahl is not only talking to the world again, she is also thinking of competing against it once more, which could prove the hardest task of all. Last weekend she won the national team cross-country championship with Sale Harriers. Today, she flies out to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to continue the long process of mental and physical rehabilitation at a training camp run by her Norwegian-born husband, Vicente.

By Monday morning, if a meeting of the arbitration panel of the International Amateur Athletic Federation this weekend has confirmed her innocence, as is widely expected, the long fight will effectively be over. "I believe it when I hear it," Modahl said with understandable force. Only a few scores would then be left unsettled with the British Athletic Federation (BAF), which banned her from athletics for four years after a positive drugs test in Portugal in the summer of 1994, then overturned the ban, on appeal, six months later.

Modahl is suing the BAF for £480,000, but the cost of almost two lost years cannot be expressed in figures, whatever the "for sale" sign outside her house might suggest. Sitting in her living room,



Family comforts — husband Vicente and daughter Imani — have helped Modahl. Photograph: Barry Greenwood

her husband's arm stretched protectively round her as it has been, spiritually, throughout her difficulties. Modahl, recalled her first race back, in the unlikely setting of Derby County Football Club's ground, on a wet and miserable Valentine's Day.

"Even down to the last minute, I was looking for a way out because I still hadn't decided whether I wanted to race again. There was no one around. Then, about 45 minutes before the start, a few people began to arrive, the markers went up and I thought: 'Right then, I'd better warm up.' She won the race and for the first time began to look forward instead of back.

Whether that will mark the first step on the road to full Olympic competition is not quite so clear. Modahl will not commit herself, other than to say it is in the back of her

mind. "I've gone through a lot of different stages," she said. "Initially I was confused, bemused and hurt and I just cut off from everyone. I was introverted and distant, depressed, hysterical. I had lost my belief in human nature."

She felt surrounded by reminders of the case. "I could see my medals hung up on the walls and Vicente on the phone constantly to the lawyers. It was like being a prisoner, but voluntarily. I didn't really want to go out because people would shout at me: 'Hey, Diane, keep going, we're right behind you,' and even though they meant well, it brought everything back.

Then, as the light started to shine more brightly, I began to be more confident again. I was beginning to talk more to my family and friends and to be

more positive. But I was still asking myself: 'Do I really want to go back to a sport that's done this to me?' I once regarded athletics as fun, easy, enjoyable, motivating. It is a big step trying to recover that magic, because that's what has been taken away from me." At times she talks in the third person, as if Diane Modahl was really someone else altogether.

In a sense she was. In the darkest hours, Vicente had to watch his wife's every move. Once, he found her brandishing a two-foot long Norwegian hunting knife, a present from his mother. As one stage, she stopped running. "When I first got back from Canada, I just ran and ran, to release the anger, I suppose. But as the case went on, I found it harder and harder. I would go out and do 100 metres, 200 metres and have to come home."

The birth of her daughter, Imani, the name is Swahili for "hope" six months ago has brought some sense of perspective without stilling the anger. Athletics will never be her life as once it was, just a part of it, along with her roles as student (she completes her final examinations in media studies at Manchester University in May), wife, mother and *cause célèbre*. Atlanta still seems a long way off.

"Getting back that feeling of running fast and comfortably. That will be the hardest thing. But I'd like to see how far I can go, channel all the negative energy of the last 18 months on to the track and push myself to the limits, not because I am desperate to make the Olympic team, but just to see what Diane Modahl can do." At the age of 29, it is not too late. The spirit of the athlete might yet prove to be her salvation.

## England in need of new cricketing structure

From Mr S. J. B. Langdale

Sir, For something like half a century England's Test match record has been disappointing overall, with more matches lost than won against the major Test match-playing countries since 1950.

One thing that is different about cricket in England is the structure of the first-class game, whereby only those who are willing to play cricket full-time become eligible for English teams. This means effectively that these teams have to be chosen from the relatively small pool of 18 county staffs.

In other Test match countries people who have not had to stake their all on making a living from county cricket and who play high-grade club cricket much of the time are eligible to graduate to state or provincial sides and then to Test cricket when good enough. Even though the populations of most of these

countries are very much smaller than that of the United Kingdom, they are able effectively to choose their teams from a wider pool.

It is arguable whether Test and county cricket is more important but, since the counties could not maintain their present programmes without revenue from Test matches, there is a strong case for scrapping full-time professional cricket in England and replacing it with the sort of limited provincial or state competitions that exist elsewhere with rather more success than can be claimed for the products of the largely unwatched English county four-day game.

Yours faithfully,  
S. J. B. LANGDALE,  
Park House, Culworth,  
Banbury, Oxfordshire.

From the Reverend Barry Browning  
Sir, I wonder how long it will be before those in authority

within our national sporting act on the realisation that our top cricketers play far too much.

When we saw them play in South Africa and then the World Cup, they just looked stale. I understand that the South African cricketing authorities have insisted that, if Shaun Pollock is to join Warwickshire, there must be a clause in his contract limiting the amount of cricket he is allowed to play. It is obvious that overseas authorities realise our top players play too much.

It would be very interesting to look at the number of days' competitive cricket that the top English cricketers play in a year and compare this with the top cricketers from the other leading cricketing countries.

Yours sincerely,  
BARRY BROWNING,  
The Rectory, Roche,  
St Austell, Cornwall.

## One-day superior

From Mr N. J. D. Baptiste

Sir, In cricket, rugby and football England have now achieved the dismal distinction of demonstrating flair-free playing styles around ten years behind their leading international opponents. Our cricket has seen the most spectacular decline.

I would entirely agree with John Bryant (Bryant's Eye, March 14) that limited-overs one-day cricket must inevitably overtake Test cricket in popularity, if only for practical, commercial and economic considerations. Who these days wants to pay £30-odd to watch one day of a five-day Test match which may well end in a draw, when, for much the same amount, he can see a complete international game with a guaranteed win/loss result?

In my experience the detractors of the one-day game are almost in every case those who have never actually played it. Having played both types of game myself, I have no doubt that the limited-overs version is the more demanding because there is no draw to hide behind if things go badly. It is also superior because it places equal importance on batting, bowling and fielding.

My ideal format would be a compromise: a two-day, 100-overs-a-game under normal rules, with no limitation

on bowlers' overs or field-placings played in whites for the purists. But what a pity that both the England chairman and our captain had to disparage one-day cricket in order to try to excuse England's inept performance.

Yours faithfully,  
N. J. D. BAPTISTE,  
23 Gladwyn Road,  
Putney, SW15.

From Dr Valerie Goldberg  
Sir, I take John Bryant's point that one-day cricket is a valid sport in its own right, but while I accept that the 30-metre ring for field placing may be necessary to prevent defensive play, I cannot agree with him about the field placing regulations in the first 15 overs.

For me, beautiful strokes played against bowlers restricted in this way are about as meaningful as beautiful strokes played in the nets. In the past, with the possible exceptions of the leg-side fielders rule and the restrictions on bouncers, the laws of cricket relating to the game as played on the field have only been altered in attempts to preserve the balance between bat and ball.

Yours faithfully,  
VALERIE GOLDBERG,  
6 Hollycroft Avenue,  
Wembley, Middlesex.

## Shades of blue

From Mr Ian Sheldon

Sir, The difference between Oxford University Torpids and Cambridge University Leis, to which Mr Philip Wedmore referred (Sports Letters, March 8), arises from the different rules governing the actions of crews after a bump has occurred.

In Leis the race is over for both crews, whose positions are reversed on the next day. So, for each crew moving up, one must move down. In Torpids, however, only the crew that has recorded a bump drops out, while the crew that has been bumped must continue rowing. This leads to the possibility of one crew being bumped by many others on the same day, hence the imbalance between risers and fallers. In practice, a drop of more than two places is usually the result of crashing into the bank!

As for which system is better for undergraduates' moral attitudes, one would hope that performance on the sports field has no bearing on the behaviour of it. Some football "fans" might take note.

Yours faithfully,  
IAN SHELDON,  
University College,  
Oxford.

Sports Letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211. They must include a daytime telephone number.

## SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT  
The declarer (Howard Cohen) confessed to erring on this hand.

Dealer South	Love all	Rubber Bridge
<p>♠ Q32 ♥ AKJ4 ♦ AKQ4 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ K5 ♥ 7655 ♦ J876 ♣ 108</p>	<p>♠ 1072 ♥ 108832 ♦ KQ3</p> <p>♠ A108764 ♥ 3 ♦ — ♣ K87854</p>	

Contract: Six Spades by South; Lead: ten of clubs

North opened Two Clubs and over South's Two Diamonds response rebid 2NT, showing a balanced 23-24 points. South bid Three Spades and jumped to Six Spades over North's raise to Four Spades. That was a complete gamble, and I think it is against the odds. If North has a highly suitable hand for play in spades he will not just raise to Four Spades — he will make what is known as an advance cue-bid. Change North's spade holding to K32 and he would have bid Four Clubs over Three Spades, showing a maximum raise to Four Spades with club control.

South won the club with the ace, and played a spade to the ace. When that didn't drop the king, he continued with a heart to the jack. All followed on three rounds of diamonds and two more rounds of hearts, South disposing of his five losing clubs in the process. Although it was safe for West to discard his queen of hearts under the ace or king, he held on to it. How do you think the declarer should continue?

South knew that West was not overruffing the hearts, so

he led a heart from the table, with the idea of ruffing and leading towards the queen of spades. This catered for West having started with KJx of spades. However East was able to ruff the fourth heart with the jack of spades, and the contract went down.

At the point where the declarer had to come off dummy, the defence had two hearts left, three diamonds and three clubs. Hence, as Cohen pointed out later, the defence are less likely to get a damaging ruff if declarer plays either a diamond or a club — Had the declarer done that, he would have made his unsound contract.

For details of *The Times* Midland Private Banking National Bridge challenge, contact the event organisers on 0181-942 9506 or write to: Britannic Building, Beverley Way, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4PH or fax to: 0181-942 9569

Robert Sheehan writes on Bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

## KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

White: Nigel Short  
Black: MChess Pro  
Guayaquil, February 1995

White	Black
1 d4	Nf6
2 c3	e6
3 Bg5	c5
4 e3	b6
5 Nd2	c5
6 Bc3	Bc7
7 f4	O-O
8 Ng3	Ba6
9 Bxa6	Nxa6
10 O-O	Nc7
11 Ne5	Qd8
12 Qc3	Rc8
13 Rxe1	Rac8
14 Kh1	a6
15 g4	Rf8
16 Bxh6	Bxh6
17 g5	Ba7
18 Qh5	g6
19 Qxh6	Bf8
20 Qf4	Rc7
21 Rf3	cd4
22 e4d4	Rc8
23 Rh3	Bg7

Black resigns

Diagram of final position

After 24 Qxh7+ Kb8 25 Ng4. Black's position swiftly collapses.

Short beats machine

Nigel Short has won a convincing 2-0 victory against the world micro-computer champion.

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Gies - Browne, Boston 1988. The black king is defended by many pieces but these units are also depriving him of breathing space. How did White complete the suffocation with an attractive tactical sequence?

Solution, page 46

## WINCANTON

THUNDERER

2.15 Secret Spring, 2.15 Trying Again, 3.15 Bourne, 3.45 Cavins, 4.20 Still in Business, 4.50 Hawtorn, 5.20 Dashed.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 3.50 Cavins, Carl Evans: 4.20 Oaklands Word.

GOING GOOD

2.15 BRITISH FIELD SPORTS SOCIETY MAIDEN

HURDLE (2, 100m) (18 runners)

1. 08 BLASTING DAY 20 R 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# Young pretenders challenge world No 1 in her favourite fiefdom

## Davies sets the highest standard

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES  
IN PHOENIX

EARLIER this year, when JoAnne Carner let it be known she would be standing down as captain of the United States Solheim Cup team, there was a request for volunteers to replace her. Helen Dobson, from Lincolnshire, stood up and brought the house down. Judy Rankin got the job in the end, but the Europeans — plus an exceptional Australian or two — have set out to make her task as difficult as possible.

Their aim was to win every event on the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) Tour this season, shutting out the Americans. Liselotte Neumann, the Swede with the smoothly cultured swing, won two of the first four tournaments and Karrie Webb, the 21-year-old Australian who won the Westabix Women's British Open last August, won another. The third event, however, was won by Meg Mallon, a cheerful, freckle-faced American.

Mallon, a former US Open champion, did well to win while she could, for the Standard Register Ping event, which starts today at Moon Valley Country Club in Phoenix, Arizona, has become the personal fiefdom of Laura Davies, still the world No 1 according to the Ping leaderboard, the women's equivalent of the Sony rankings.

Davies, now 32, missed the cut in Tucson last week — Neumann won — and was hampered by a bad back, caused, she thought, by an excess of tennis and cricket during her weeks off at home. She also putted poorly — "I hit it greens last Friday and was only one under par" — and, clad in a penguin-patterned shirt, gave the putter reps palpitations as she tried out their wares under the desert sun.

Davies and her caddy, her cousin, Matthew, went to Las Vegas for the Bruno v Tyson heavyweight boxing encounter. "It was the best sporting event I've ever been to," Davies, a Bruno fan, said. "The pre-fight build-up was brilliant." Inevitably, however, though she is, she did not have any money on the outcome. "You couldn't get close to the bookies, the queues were 30 deep."



Davies's powerful driving still makes her the player the rest must beat at Moon Valley this week. Photograph: Tony White

Not too many people will bet against Davies at Moon Valley, where she has won for the past two years, but she faces formidable opposition, not least from two youngsters: Annika Sorenstam, 25, of Sweden, who won enough awards to last a lifetime in 1995, and Webb, who leads the money-list after her first few weeks on the US tour. She has won more than \$200,000 faster than any player in LPGA history.

Sorenstam enjoyed a season she knows that she is unlikely ever to repeat. She won the Women's US Open, topped the money-lists on both sides of the Atlantic, was player of the year in the United States.

She also picked up, she reckoned, more than 15 awards. She was Athlete of the Year in Sweden, the first golfer to win the country's highest sporting honour, her name now alongside those of

superstars such as Bjorn Borg and Ingemar Stenmark. Everything came in such a rush that Sorenstam took five weeks off over Christmas and the new year, taking stock of what she had done, planning how to cope, discussing the future with David Esch, her fiancé (the wedding date is set

but secret), cooking, playing with her cat, Nelson, and generally just being normal. It meant she did not play in the Chrysler-Plymouth Tournament of Champions in early January, which drew criticism. "I understand that," Sorenstam said, "but I need a bit of understanding, too. I was mentally drained. I'm a human being and I need a break. I can't be everywhere and I am going to be out here for years."

Sorenstam admitted she was still "walking on clouds", but she should have little trouble keeping in touch with reality, something that has never bothered the inimitable Muffin Spencer-Devlin, who is still convinced she was King Arthur in another existence. Muffin's recent decision to come out — to admit that she is a lesbian — merited five pages in *Sports Illustrated*. Guinevere, however, was unavailable for comment.



Davies: the trophy was hers in 1994

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## Feherty back in the old routine

FROM MEL WEBB IN LISBON

THE brilliant one-liner, the rapturously fabled as often at himself as at others, has always been David Feherty's stock in trade. But in the blackest times of a miserable winter last year, the Irish golfer's mordant wit made him more Pagliacci than Puck; behind the clown's face there was turmoil and misery being enacted in what has always been an overactive mind.

A grindingly unsuccessful and increasingly unhappy two-year sojourn on the US PGA Tour ended with his professional life in tatters and his personal life in rags. He did not hold on to his player's card, then failed to win it back at the tour's school, and he was just completing a divorce from Caroline, his wife.

He lost weight dramatically, and if the one-liners did not completely dry up, they were less frequent and seemed forced. Feherty's emotions were in a turmoil.

It was emotion that led him to announce publicly that his playing career was over. It was emotion that told him that it was no longer worth putting in the effort and getting nowhere.

It was emotion that led him to talk to Sam Torrance, his

close friend and fellow Ryder Cup player, who told him that he was making a mistake.

And it was emotion that returned him to the surroundings that brought him his greatest success, the PGA European Tour. It has been the happiest of returns. In a professional sense, Feherty has come home. He has a second and a fourth in his name in four tournaments, and is fourteenth in the European money-list as he goes into his fifth tournament, the Portuguese Open, which starts at Arcadia near here today.

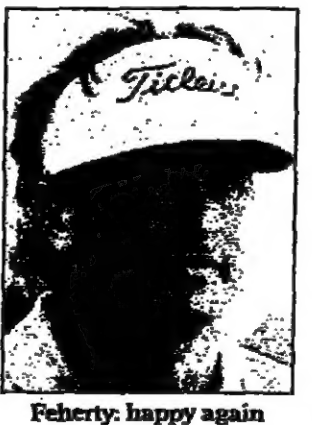
He was asked if he felt himself to be at a crossroads in his darkest moments. "Not so much a crossroads," he said. "My mind was more like Spaghetti Junction, there was so much going on in there."

He was, however, potentially playing the game better than he ever had. "My engine was running perfectly," he said. "The trouble was, there was nobody at the wheel."

Now there is, and he has found himself back on the right road with ambitions — a sixth European tour win for a start, then a place in the next Ryder Cup team. He intends to play a score or more tournaments in Europe, interspersed with visits to his home in Dallas, to be with his sons, Shey and Rory.

He has also found personal happiness again in the person of Anita Schneider, a sales executive from Mississippi whom he met on a blind date and who exercised her Leap Year privilege by proposing to Feherty on February 29.

"What did you say, David?" somebody asked. Long and considered thought, then: "I think it went something along the lines of 'Yes, please,' as I recall it." David Feherty is back, and European golf is the better for it.



Feherty: happy again

### WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 42

#### ZEITGEIST

(a) The general intellectual, moral, political and cultural spirit of an age. For example, the zeitgeist of today's younger generation includes conservatism, Greenery, equality of opportunity, the computer game, the loud pop song and the gore film.

#### FLAGITIOUS

(a) Grossly criminal, utterly disgraceful, shamefully wicked: just about the strongest condemnatory adjective in the book. From the Latin *flagitium* a crime, sin and shockingly bad behaviour. Government reports favour milder epithets such as incompetent, misleading and sophistical. In Rome, *flagitium* was punished by throwing a book even rockier than the Scott report at the offender.

#### CALEFACIENT

(a) A medicinal agent producing a feeling of warmth, such as the military lot of rum before winter night patrol. From the Latin for "warm-making". As you pass round the cognac, you could try saying: "Calefacient, anyone?"

#### SPHRAGISTICS

(a) The study of engraved seals. From the Greek for such a seal. A useful know-all-dropping term, as in, "When I was reading *Sphragistics* at New Hall." The study might seem inoffensive though obscure, but the cruelty of the original engraving process in a world that disapproves of seal-culling seems barbaric.

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### RADIO CHOICE

## Con trick in Eldorado

If the Snakes Don't Get You... Radio 4, 2.00pm.

Paul Tomlinson doesn't use the words, so I will. They are: con trick. Tomlinson learnt the full extent of it when he went out to South Africa to uncover the roots of his ancestors who emigrated to the Cape in 1820. The British Government hit on a way of cutting the lengthening jobless queues. It offered cheap passage for 4,000 British subjects, footing them into believing that good farming land and security were waiting for them. No Eldorado there, however. The settlers found barren land. Worse, they were used as a buffer against raids from hostile Africans across the border. All in all, it was a shameful chapter in British colonial history.

Soundtrack: Bucks in the USSR. Radio 4, 7.20pm.

Imogen Edwards-Jones wrote *The Taming of the Eagle*, a book about Russia in the first 100 days after communism collapsed. She knew what it was like, having lived and worked there. Tonight, she reports on what is happening in Russia now. If ever she writes a sequel to *The Taming of the Eagle*, she might call it *The Gathering of the Vultures*. The scavengers are the money-driven twentysomethings from the West whose hungry companies have swooped on Russia and are squeezing the last rouble out of its economy. "Twisted, perverted, young men," an older, wiser Westerner calls them. He says these commercial wideboys are much in need of a bit of civilisation under their belts. Peter Daville

### RADIO 1

FM Stereo 6.00am Clio Warm 6.30 Chris Evans 6.00am Simon Mayo 12.00 Lisa Tashon incl at 12.30-12.45pm Newsbeat incl at 1.15 The Net 2.00 Nelly Campbell 4.00 Mark Goodier, and 5.20-6.45 Newsbeat, and at 6.15 The Net 7.00 Evening Session 9.00 Collins and Macneil's Hit Parade 10.00 John Peel 10.45 Off the Shelf 11.00 Newsdesk 11.30 World Ranking 12.00 News 12.05pm Business 12.15 Britain Today 12.30 Assignment 1.00 Newsbeat 2.00 Newsbeat 3.00

### RADIO 2

FM Stereo 6.00am Sarah Kennedy 6.15 Pause for Thought 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.15 Pause for Thought 9.30 Ken Bruce incl at 10.00 Pick of the 10s 11.30 Jimmy Young 2.00pm Double Thrower 3.30 Alex Lester 5.05 Paul Henry 7.00 Laughter in the Air 7.30 David Alan 8.00 Paul Jones 10.00 Shared Experience 10.30 The Jamisons 12.05am Sue McManis, incl at 1.20 Pause for Thought 3.00 Steve Madden

### RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The Breakfast Programme incl 6.55, 7.25 Racing preview 8.25 The Magazine and 10.35 Euronews 11.30 Health News 12.00 Midday with Mar in 12.30pm Moneycheck 1.15 Entertainment News 2.05 Focus on the net at 3.15 Prime Minister's Question Time 4.00 Nation-wide, incl 6.45 Entertainment News 7.00 News Extra incl at 7.20 Sport 7.30 On the Line 8.05 Wogan on Top 9.05 SportsAmerica 10.05 News Talk 11.00 Night Extra 12.05am Night Moves 2.05 Up At Night

### TALK RADIO

6.00am Sandy War 7.00 Simon Bates 10.00 Jonathan King 12.00 Tommy Boyd 2.00pm Anne Robinson 4.00 Scott Chisholm 7.00 Sean Bolger 8.00 Moe Dee 10.00 James White 1.00-6.00am Ian Collins

### RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, Orslow (Spring Quartet in B minor, Op 40); Schubert (Symphony No 8 in B minor, Unfinished); Britten (Sea Pictures); Telemann (Double Concerto No 1 in D minor); Cole Porter (Snake in the Grass); Gershwin (No 140, Weicht Auf, ruff uns die Stimme) 9.00 Morning Collection with Paul Gambaccini, Telemann (Suite: Don Quixotte auf der Hochzeit des Comacho); Mussorgsky (The Nursery, excerpt); Schumann (Symphony No 3 in E flat) 10.00 Musical Encounters: Froberger (Tombaeur sur la mort de M. Blancherchere; Capriccio No 1); 10.05 Artists of the Week: Juillard Quartet; Beethoven (String Quartet in F, Op 135); 10.35 Messiaen (Cinq recitatives, No 4); Mozart (String Quartet in D); Martin (Symphony No 4) 12.00 Composers of the Week: The Court of Frederick the Great. Occasional music by Frederick himself. C. P. E. Bach, C. H. Graun, J. A. Hasse and Mozart 1.00 Arts and Attractions: Highlights of late-Baroque opera (2/4) 2.00 Schools' Radio Showcase 2.05 Something to Think About 2.40 Music Workshop 3.00 Ragtime, Works by Debussy and Stravinsky 3.10 The Fifties: Made for TV. Melvin Bragg looks back at an edition of Monitor 3.25 Vale of Glamorgan Festival 1995. The opening concert from last year's festival, Michael York (Ash); Michael

### RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (LW only) 6.30 News Shipping 6.10 Ferrying Today 6.35 Prayer for the Day, with Dr Christine Trevett 6.30 Today incl at 7.00, 7.30, 8.00, 8.30 News 7.25, 8.25 Sport 7.45 Thought for the Day, with John Newbury 8.40 Yesterday in Parliament 8.50 Weather 9.00 News 9.05 The Moral Maze 10.00-10.30 News: A Little of What You Fancy (FM only). David Jason stars as Pop Lartin and Pam Farris as Ma in the final episode of Eric Pringle's dramatisation of the novel by H. E. Bates 10.15 This Soap's Tale (LW only) 10.30 Woman's Hour. Introduced by Jenni Murray 11.30 From Our Own Correspondent 12.00 News: You and Yours, with Chris Choth 12.25pm The British Film Studios. Film historian John Huntley takes around the sites of Britain's film studios This programme features Bernard Vortals, director at Twickenham Studios in the 1930s 12.55 Weather 1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clarke 1.40 The Archers (1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 News: If the Snakes Don't Get You... See Choice 3.00 News: The Afternoon Shift, with Dave Braham 4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope, Paul Allen sees Twelve Angry Men, directed by Harold Pinter in Bristol, and talks to Isabelle Huppert and Anne Massey about their roles in Mary Stuart

### FREQUENCY GUIDE

RADIO 1, FM 97.6-99.8, RADIO 2, FM 88.0-90.2, RADIO 3, FM 90.2-92.4, RADIO 4, FM 92.6, LW 198; MW 188 (12.45-5.55pm), CLASSIC FM, FM 100-102, VIRGIN RADIO, FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215, TALK RADIO UK, MW 1053, 1089; Television Rosemary Smith and Susan Thomson



# Violent men, tender men and misfits

When the next television set is delivered and I find that the man on the Taiwanese assembly line has omitted the V for Violence chip, I shall ring up Virginia Bottomley and she will arrive in her little blue van and her stinky blue overalls, wearing a baseball cap back to front.

She will unscrew the back of my set and before she can fit the V-chip in exchange for 60p, I shall hand her £1.20 and she will say: "Wossat, guv?" And I shall say: "That is for the P for Pointless chip, which I require in addition to the V for Violence chip. Will that be four sugars, or six?"

After Virginia, in her sturdy Reeboks, has squelched out of sight across the mudslide that is my drive, my life will change. No longer will I glance at the television listings, say the dread words "this looks interesting" and spend the next hour wishing I had

pointed the dog or taken the kennel for a walk.

No, the P-chip will free me from inanity, release me from (especially) documentaries that start no where and finish up nowhere else. If you want the blunt truth in bold type, I shall be released from the likes of *Modern Times*: Tracy and Joey (BBC2).

The root of this tedious, pretentious piece of nothing, shown last night, was a real tragedy. At Christmas 1941, Tracy Merrens, aged 31, was abducted in Birmingham by two men who took her to a church in Cheshire. There, they set fire to her. Tracy lived for 16 hours. So bad were her burns that when the hospital put her on a drip, the fluids leaked out through her skin.

Just Kavanagh, a known drug addict, had been her partner for 15 years and the police believe the two abductors were actually looking for him. It probably had some-

thing to do with money. The case was heavily publicised at the time, nobody was ever caught and although Joey was certainly not involved in the murder, he refuses to say whether he knows who might have done it.

So, a tragic. But *Modern Times* got no further than the police have. The programme deployed every film gimmick, slow motion, black and white, slow pans over mundane artefacts, but none served to hide the fact that *Modern Times* knew nothing, knowing all the old types of this drab vehicle, a tale of low-life, monosyllabic misfits in which the only people one cared about, apart from the dead Tracy, were the couple's two children, smushing, bemused kids adrift in the floss of their father's life.

*Modern Times* asked no new questions, such as how come these

## REVIEW



Peter Barnard

children are living in such an atmosphere, and extracted no new answers. It happens that the series producer, Stephen Lambert, has been responsible for some distinguished work. But this was not that. This was gazing into the sewer in order to tell us that it smells. I think we knew that.

Joey was the least of the men on BBC2 last night, in more ways than one. Elsewhere we had the

male angle on inter-war courtship and one man's angle on violence towards women. The latter in a curious little ten-minute show called *A Bad Time to be a Man*.

Curious because the man who made the film was shown but not identified by name. Therefore everyone who recognises him will know who he is but the rest of us, not recognising him, might as well know his name because we aren't going to meet him anyway.

The man in question had been brought up in a home without men and had gone into the Army, where he discovered that playing chess relieved violent emotions. These had surfaced again in his marriage but he found treatment and cure, if cure there be.

Routine stuff. So was his concluding statement that "extremist" feminism had "caused men to feel inadequate and insecure". I would have thought there was more to male insecurity than that but this

was turning into a night when more questions were left hanging than received answers.

If you could stand any more men (well, ITV had a football match), *A Man's World: The Lover* (BBC2) had a lot more going for it. This, the third in a series about attitudes to masculinity in the first half of the century, focused on courtship in the inter-war years.

Were men taught etiquette then? One thought he had been. He was told that you went up the stairs of a bus behind a lady in case she fell backwards and came down the stairs in front of her in case she fell forwards. I was taught that, too, long after the war. By then, the trouble was finding a bus.

Class differences shaped the approach to romance. Upper-crust men drifted into marriage within their own tight circle, whereas raw emotion propelled working-class

liaisons, albeit slowly. Geordie Todd, a retired North Shields trawlerman, told how he courted his wife-to-be for five years: it was a year before he was allowed to touch her. Geordie was a patient man. "I wanted someone to look up to. I just wanted to care for her."

Such sentiments can be made to sound quaint, but even in the hurly burly, grab-a-girlie of modern life, tenderness is surely not out of fashion. The trouble with men, as this series shows, is unchanged: we are better at tenderness when reflected on in tranquillity than at the moment it might do some good.

Frank Davies said in the film that his wife was always wanting him to say that he loved her. He showed it all the time, but she wanted him to say so. "Now and again I'd blurt it out," Frank said. "When I'd had a drink."

Matthew Bond is on holiday

## CHOICE

Reputations: Joy Adamson — Born Wild? BBC2, 9.00pm

The author of *Born Free* was far from the demure English rose played in the film by Virginia McKenna, as McKenna was a first to admit. The real Joy Adamson was a volatile and foul-tempered Austrian, by general consent impossible to deal with, and a husband-batterer to boot. Poor George Adamson, the mild-mannered game warden whom she married after the collapse of her two previous marriages, had to endure not only her affairs but physical beatings. The film suggests that her extreme fondness for animals stemmed from an inability after an early aborted pregnancy to have her own children. Her hearing of Elsa the lioness was based on genuine affection and although the book and film *Born Free* make her a fortune (George got nothing), she spent the money not on herself but on the conservation of African wildlife.

Taggart: Angel Eyes ITV, 9.00pm  
Thirteen years after his birth, and despite losing its central character, the Scottish police series is still remarkably resilient and confident of itself. Nor does the invention of the creator, Glenn Chandler, show any sign of flagging. Perhaps the secret is that Taggart does not exhaust its ideas by being screamed too often. Chandler's new three-partner is well up to standard, combining a nicely teasing detective story with a strong whiff of brooding Glasgow atmosphere. You do not tune into Taggart for light comedy. When an elderly musician is found strangled, his homosexual partner of 40 years becomes a suspect. The dead man's daughter surfaces, still bitter that her father abandoned the family. Not the least merit of Chandler's script is its sensitive handling of the gay culture at the heart of the story.

Undercover Britain: The Real Auf Wiedersehen Pet Channel 4, 9.00pm  
Although Germany's soaring unemployment figures have sparked bitterness against foreign workers there is another side. It is cogently put in this film by Neil Davies, a former roofer, who arms himself with hidden camera and microphone, teams up with two other Brits and tries his luck on German building sites. His starting point is advertisements in the British tabloid press. The men are recruited by a Dutch middleman. The German firms are supposed to pay the Dutchman, who pays the workers. Disenchantment soon sets in. The hours are long, the conditions are bad, dangerous and when it comes to getting paid, the Dutch sub-contractor is mysteriously uncontactable. It is no consolation that workers from Turkey and Bosnia are treated even worse.

Mistresses: The Woman Scorned BBC1, 10.05pm  
Cheated wives and scorned lovers are to the fore this week, telling how their men abandoned them and, in some cases, detailing their methods of revenge. Once again the series follows in the footsteps of the tabloid newspapers. Diana Moran, aka the Green Goddess, and Lady Susan Moon, who chopped up her husband's clothes and among those rehoming their already much-publicised stories. A tale viewers may not have heard of is Claire, who fell in love with the private detective she hired to spy on her husband. Dame Barbara Cartland suggests that it is up to women if they want to keep their partners. But wonder whether Dame Barbara would approve of Toni, a stripper who has now ideas for wives afraid of losing their men. Peter Waymark

6.00am GMTV (1805452)

9.25am Win, Lose or Draw (s) (2146402) 9.55

Regional News (Teletext) (4407225)

10.00 The Time... The Place (6802641)

10.35 This Morning. Weekly magazine (98661315) 12.20pm Regional News (Teletext) and weather (2018315)

12.30 ITN Lunchtime News (Teletext) and weather (7850562)

12.55 Shortland Street (s) (7870773)

1.25 Coronation Street (s) (Teletext) (9878204)

2.00 Home and Away. Share awakens from his coma (Teletext) (s) (30744857)

2.25 Chain Letters (Teletext) (s) (30758792)

2.50 Vanessa (Teletext) (s) (4358989)

3.20 ITN News (Teletext) (9844727) 3.25

Regional News (Teletext) and weather (7344588)

3.30 The Riddlers (s) (5718732) 3.40

Wizards (s) (2723247) 3.50 Repeat (9828315) 4.15 Mike and Angelo (s) (s) (6281042) 4.40 Raboot II (Teletext) (s) (1547171)

5.10 A Country Practice (s) (9614063)

5.40 ITN Early Evening News (Teletext) and weather (388792)

6.00 Home and Away (s) (Teletext) (s) (815888)

6.25 Regional News (Teletext) (346529)

7.00 Emmerdale (Teletext) (s) (5421)

7.30 3-D. Julia Somerville presents the story of Tracy Sant, whose life was destroyed by stalker Anthony Burston (315)

8.00 The Bill. Loxton and Page have their hands full after a hen night is interrupted by the groom (Teletext) (1841)

8.30 Blues and Twos. Solo One. A repeat of the series following the work of motorbiking paramedics of the London Ambulance Service (Teletext) (s) (9898)

9.00 Taggart: Angel Eyes (Teletext) (s) (1898)

10.00 Party Political Broadcast by the Conservative Party (580334)

10.05 News at Ten (Teletext) (237570)

10.35 Regional News (Teletext) (123711)

10.45 Getaway (Teletext) (980402)

11.15 On the Line. Debate (987315)

11.45 Hunter. Detective series with Fred Dryer and Stephanie Kramer (215841)

1.45 Not Fade Away (s) (2778464)

2.40 Shift. A showcase for young producers and directors now on television (232281)

3.35 FILM: Tidy Endings (1991). Emotional drama starring Harvey Keitel and Stockard Channing. Directed by Gavin Miller (s) (8022280)

4.30 The Time... The Place (s) (81657)

5.00 The New Mr and Mrs Show (s) (53242)

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THURSDAY MARCH 21 1996

New faces called up by England

# Venables offers youngsters chance to shine

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

THE morning after England was downgraded from club class, following Nottingham Forest's exposure in Europe, Terry Venables turned to youth. The England coach's squad for the match against Bulgaria at Wembley next Wednesday includes Robbie Fowler, 20, and the Neville brothers, Gary, 21, and Philip, 19. These players represent, possibly, an attempt to skip a generation and follow the impressive example of Holland, whose deployment of the Ajax teenagers has so impressed Venables.

On the other hand, Venables went to the other end of the age spectrum, recalling Mark Wright, the Liverpool centre back, for his first appearance in an England squad for four years. Perhaps Venables is looking for omens: the Neville brothers, of Manchester United, are the first players from the same family to be called to England colours since Jack and Bobby Charlton, those twin pillars of the 1966 World Cup triumph, last played together in the 1970 World Cup.

Philip Neville, now the baby of the new England gathering, has shown such a reliable temperament, such rapid maturity, that he can indeed make an instant challenge for England's troubled left back position. The injury to Graeme Le Saux, and the ageing of Stuart Pearce, obliges the coach to look for an alternative. Venables said of

## SQUAD

D. Seaman (Arsenal), I. Walker (Tottenham), T. Flowers (Blackburn), R. Jones (Liverpool), S. Hooton (Newcastle), S. Pearce (Nottingham Forest), P. Neville (Man Utd), M. Wright (Liverpool), G. Southgate (Aston Villa), U. Ekeke (Aston Villa), G. Neville (Man Utd), S. Shaw (Nottingham Forest), T. Shieff (QPR), A. Richardson (Liverpool), P. Gascoigne (Sheff Wed), D. Platt (Arsenal), P. Jones (Leeds), D. Wile (Sheff Wed), P. Beardsley (Newcastle), R. Fowler (Liverpool), A. Shearer (Blackburn), L. Ferdinand (Newcastle), S. Shefferson (Tottenham), R. Lee (Newcastle), S. McManis (Liverpool), N. Barmby (Middlesbrough).

Philip Neville: "He's in there on performances. I've watched him get better and better, and his progression has been just like his brother a year ago."

Brother Gary, a veteran now of six internationals, has shown the versatility to operate at right back or centre back, his preferred position, for Manchester United. There

League plans relegated . 44  
Brothers united . 45

is an easy answer to those who doubt the wisdom of including a teenager in his country's most important competition in three decades. If Philip Neville were to play in the European championship in June, he might well oppose Patrick Kluivert, also 19, but a fixture as the Dutch centre forward. And, Paolo Maldini, the finest left back in the world, was an Italy World Cup player before the age and experience the younger Neville has

acquired so far. Certainly the old country needs some fresh blood.

At the City Ground on Tuesday night, the defining moment of Nottingham Forest's awful collapse against Bayern Munich came when Pearce, their left back and captain, galloped forward. The crowd roared on their dependable war-horse, but the ball was never under his control, and Lothar Matthäus, deemed too old for the Germany side, simply waited for him, waited and took the loose ball away.

Matthäus had commented that the game would be "heart against technique", and we all know which quality tends to be lacking in the English.

Nothing, so far as we yet know, is lacking in Fowler. He will come of age on April 9, but already he has scored 79 goals in 122 first team starts for Liverpool, already he looks the most instinctive sniffer of goals in this land since Jimmy Greaves. Fowler through England's youth and Under-21 teams, has appeared to be able to perform in harness with any partner, or none, and so Venables's decision not to select Stan Collymore, his Liverpool running mate, should not dent the young man's confidence. Indeed, you never know, Fowler may even cajole Alan Shearer into finding the net for England for the first time in well over a year.

Two players return to the fold, David Platt, who at last is beginning to look fit now that he is back with an English club, and Paul Ince, who, as anticipated, is out of purdah so far as the England coach is concerned.

Back, after a much, much longer period in the wilderness, comes Mark Wright. What a remarkable achievement it will be if he regains the England shirt which he wore 45 times, reaching heights at the 1990 World Cup in a three-man central defence. Two other players who know how to operate that system, Tony Adams and Gary Pallister, are both absent through injury. "What this is," Wright said yesterday, "is me getting the call because Adams, Pallister and Southgate have all been injured. Now it's up to me to try to make it difficult for the management to leave me out once I get a chance."

He knows the script well, for last year he was chosen only six times for Liverpool, and he admits he lapsed into despair. He was talked out of that by the singer Joey Marsden, who, being a good neighbour, told him he had precious ability, precious years left in his almost 33-year-old frame, and that it was a crime to mope and waste the skill that Marsden and many millions more would love to possess. If Wright were to take a step back in time for England, if the youngsters Venables shows every sign of trusting take that leap forward, then maybe the present generation's lack of skills can be minimised. Bulgaria, next week, will be the first test.



Lawrence Dallaglio, the Wasps captain and England flanker, takes the boys of Cumnor House School, Purley, through their paces yesterday. The training session was a reward for the boys collecting £400 for the sporting charity, Sparks. Photograph: Ian Stewart

## Emburey considers retirement option

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

JOHN EMBUREY could be forced to retire from first-class cricket even though he was cleared to resume his playing career by the Test and County Cricket Board (TCCB) at Lord's yesterday. Emburey, 43, who left Middlesex during the winter to become the Northamptonshire coach, has been told he can only play on as a list one registration.

Emburey, who won his 64th Test cap last summer, has been confirmed as list one because he was offered a two-year contract by Middlesex. Northamptonshire must now decide whether Emburey's continuing ability as an off-spinner is worth securing on

one of only two list one registrations that are allowed in any five-year period.

Retirement may be the option, as the TCCB registration committee said it would "consider the matter again as and when Emburey decided to retire from first-class cricket and his registration was cancelled". Freed of list one status, Emburey could then be available to play on a part-time basis. Steve Coverdale, the Northamptonshire chief executive, said: "We will have to sit down with John during the coming weeks and review how it leaves us."

Andrew Symonds, 20, the English-born Australian batsman, who turned down a place on the England A team

to pursue a place in the Queensland side, has indicated that he is prepared to sign a three-year contract with Gloucestershire.

Symonds has failed to displace Allan Border, the 40-year-old former Australia captain, from the Queensland side and is reported to have told friends that he now considers his future lies in England. Philip August, the Gloucestershire chief executive, said: "Obviously, we would love to have him back here. He has a contract offer in front of him, but we have not had it back signed yet."

Worcestershire have signed Amjad Mohammad, a left-arm Paul Adams-style bowler of chinamen, on a one-year

contract. John Chad, the Worcestershire chairman, said: "It's an exciting gamble."

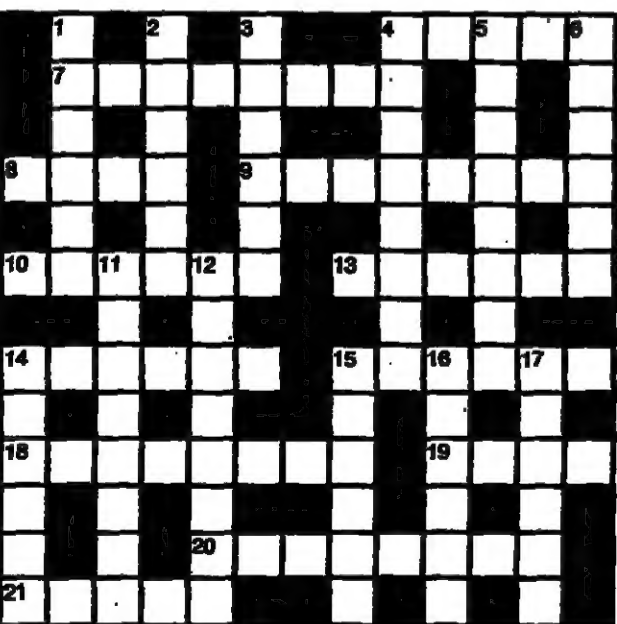
Peter Willey, the former England batsman, will umpire an overseas Test match for the first time when he stands in the first Test match between West Indies and New Zealand in Barbados on April 19. Willey is a new England appointment to the International Cricket Council (ICC) international panel alongside George Sharp, the former Northamptonshire wicket-keeper. They replace Nigel Plews and Harold Bird, Mike Denness, the former England captain, will also make his first appearance as an ICC referee for the five one-day internationals and the two

Test matches, in Barbados and Antigua.

Brian Lara has dropped out of the University of the West Indies Vice-Chancellor's XI, which opens the tour against the New Zealanders in Bridgetown, with a sore knee amid rumours that he had a heated row with Dennis Waite, the West Indies physiotherapist, on the return journey from the World Cup. Andrew Sealy, the secretary of West Indies Cricket Board of Control, admitted receiving a letter from Waite, with the West Indies since 1972, but would not elaborate on the contents.

Otis Gibson, 27, the Glamorgan all-rounder has been ruled out of the series because of a persistent groin injury.

## TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 735 in association with  
BRITISH MIDLAND

### ACROSS

- 4 Lukewarm (5)
- 7 Hawaii capital (8)
- 8 A clamp; in place of (4)
- 9 Big shop (8)
- 10 Bumble's parish job (10)
- 11 Twist (6)
- 13 Severity; precision (6)
- 14 Leave off (from) (6)
- 15 Cheaply showy (6)
- 18 Outer defensive tower (8)
- 19 Mountain pool (4)
- 20 Devoted to wife (8)
- 21 Skull cavity linked to nose (5)

### DOWN

- 1 Selection; top-quality (6)
- 2 Relax, be less formal (6)
- 3 Wook; swindle (6)
- 4 Individual lesson (8)
- 5 Risky; a Castle (Malory) (8)
- 6 Gable/window in sloping roof (6)
- 11 He came down like the wolf on the fold (Byron) (8)
- 12 Sweet and delicious (8)
- 14 Fragments of wreckage (6)
- 15 Best clothes, adornments (6)
- 16 Book creator (6)
- 17 Harry, badger (6)

### PRIZES:

THE WINNER will receive a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on British Midland's domestic or international network.  
THE RUNNER-UP will receive a return ticket to anywhere on British Midland's domestic network. British Midland offers an extensive range of departure and destination points throughout the UK, as well as Europe. As the UK's second largest scheduled service airline and Heathrow's second biggest user, it operates a fleet of 35 aircraft on over 1200 flights per week throughout the UK and Europe. All flights are subject to availability.

Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6886, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

### SOLUTION TO NO 734

ACROSS: 1 Cub reporter 8 Paste 9 Wedford 10 Debt  
11 Bickers 12 Kynes 14 Impugn 17 Diaspora 19 Mush  
22 Aldrop 23 Votum 24 Dishvelled  
DOWN: 1 Cupid 2 Best buy 3 Ewer 4 Orwell 5 Taxonomy  
6 Rhine 7 Odds-on 12 Hesperus 13 Kidnap 15 Unusual  
16 Triple 18 Acid 20 Humid 21 Pyre

## Rodman airs his opinion

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

HEAD-BUTTING a referee? Taking on the United States National Basketball Association (NBA) hierarchy? So what, Dennis Rodman was not about to admit that he was wrong; so Chicago Bulls did it for him.

Yet, even as the team's damage-control department prepared on Tuesday, a statement of apology with Rodman's name on it, the volatile — and non-repentant — forward used his radio show to charge the NBA with treating him unfairly and to insist that he is "no psycho problem child".

"I've been holding back, holding back," Rodman said on WMVP-AM, which pays him to go on air twice a week.

"I'm very emotional and very high-strung about certain things, but when you've been tested and pushed so much in every game, it's hard to hold back."

"It's hard for me to change. What am I doing in the game that no one else is doing? People hold me, people pin me down, people hit me, people do everything to me. I don't get a fair shake. I don't give a damn if I'm Dennis Rodman or Michael Jordan or Scottie Pippen or Charles Barkley, you don't just put somebody out and say 'Let's make him the example.'"

Rodman, who has served two games of his six-game suspension, went on to tell his radio audience that he would

like a private audience with David Stern, the NBA commissioner, so that he could ask him "what's the difference between me and everybody else in this league?"

Stern and Rod Thorn, his senior vice-president, suspended Rodman for head-butting Ted Bernhardt, the referee, during the game at New Jersey on Saturday. Rodman, who has challenged officials for years, also knocked over a cooler, stripped off his jersey and shouted obscenities; then, he dared Stern and Thorn to suspend him.

Embarrassed by the incident, the Bulls presented a written apology to the media and attributed it to Rodman.

## McMillan lures Hamed with £1m

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

BACKERS of Colin McMillan are offering to put up £1million to match the Barking featherweight with Naseem Hamed, the World Boxing Organisation (WBO) champion. Frank Maloney, McMillan's promoter, said he was prepared to share the show with Frank Warren, Hamed's promoter. The offer would depend on how McMillan performed in his next two contests, Maloney added.

McMillan, who recently boxed for nothing as a protest at being frozen out, stopped Justin Murphy, of Brighton, in four rounds. He meets the durable Birmingham featherweight, Peter Buckley, tonight at the Elephant and Castle Leisure Centre and then challenges Johnjo Irwin, the British champion, on May 14. McMillan, 30, a former WBO

featherweight champion, was not only confident of dealing adequately with Buckley and Irwin but also of ending Hamed's unbeaten run.

"Naz is said that," McMillan said yesterday. "But the way he's been talking he's been setting himself up to get his bubble burst and I'm the man to do it."

Maloney said, however: "All Hamed is doing is building enemies for himself. The way he's behaving and the way he shouts his mouth off is disrespectful to other opponents."

Hamed has met Buckley twice, in 1992 and 1994. The first time Hamed won on points but stopped the Birmingham man in four rounds in their second meeting. However, even though the second bout in Cardiff was a

one-sided affair, Buckley seemed to be absorbing Hamed's punches without showing any signs of going down. Thus, the bout tonight would be a reasonable indicator of how McMillan might fare against the world champion from Sheffield.

Also on the card, Mickey Cantwell, of Eltham, meets Keith Knox of Scotland. If he wins, Cantwell hopes to meet the winner of the WBO world flyweight championship bout between Jake Matlala, of South Africa, and Paul Weir of Scotland.

Cantwell, who had financial trouble last year and had his house in south London repossessed, said: "I've got no home, no grief and am happy that the pressures are off. I'll walk into the ring with no worries. It'll be a hard fight against Knox."



McMillan: offer

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